

ISLAM

FROM A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

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Islam

From a Contemporary Perspective

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With a foreword

By

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In the name of Allāh, The All – Merciful, The Ever Merciful

Foreword

This book attempts at presenting the basic concepts of Islām, and its Divine capacity for endowing the individual as well as the community with a persepetive for universal freedom in this world and pervading bliss in the Hereafter.

Part I, including seven chapters, deals with varieties of religious creeds, including the three monotheistic religions, as well as other creeds adopted by huge masses of humanity in Asia and elsewhere.

Part II, with its five chapters, presents Islām as the last revealed religion, proclaimed by prophet Muhammad fourteen centuries ago, and embraced by all Muslims everywhere A special emphasis is given to the five pillars of Islām : the Oneness of Allāh, prayers, pilgrimage, Fasting, and Zakāh.

Part III, discusses issues, prevalent in some quarters nowadays, about the attitude of Islām towards polygamy, divorce, and other related aspects of family life. Finally, there is a short overview of the concept of Jihād in Islām.

This comprehensive treatment of religion in modern societies forcefully delineates the glorious Message of Islām with its insistence of the Oneness of Allāh, the unity of prophethood, and its universal tolerance. This vigorous presentation comes forth most favorably addressed to all of us from professor Zaki Abd Allāh, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Mansūrah, Damietta Branch. Professor Zaki is, after all, an eminent scholar of English literature, who has devoted himself, thraugh his mastery

of the English language to his special interest in spreading the inimitable values of Islām. Thus, he is one of the very few, who are capable of presenting the essentials of Islām most cogently and most profoundly, in one of the most dominant languages of today.

May' Allāh favor him, and all of us, with the blessings of devont faith, and sincere dedication to Islām!

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I owe a great deal to my youngest daughter Ghada who typed the first copy of this book and put up with the continuous changes I made on that copy with indefatigable effort and great patience, till it emerged in the form it has taken at last. With her I discussed every idea and she frequently clarified my statements.

I would like, also, to express my thanks to professor Muhammad Al-Morsey who kindly helped me to locate many of the Quranic verses. He was also a great moral support.

My deepest thanks are due to all those who participated directly or indirectly in the writing of this book. They are not, however, responsible for any of the views expressed.

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Preface

In the name of Allah
The Most Merciful the Compassionate

At the very beginning, it is important to define the reader to whom this book is addressed and consequently the approach to be followed in pleading our case. When an Arab Muslim author addresses some Arab Muslim audience with regard to a religious issue, the problem is easily resolved. Both writer and readers stand on the same grounds of religious beliefs and values and use the same terms and epithets. In such case, it is enough to quote the Glorious Quran and The Sayings of the Prophet Mohammed (A.p.p.h.) to support the argument and plead the case. With regard to the non-Muslims or those who have newly adopted Islam and want to know more about it, the problem is different. It is not enough nor logical to quote the Glorious Quran or the Saying of the prophet to support your argument as they have not yet been accepted[1]. The argument has to start from scratch and procced logically towards its destined goal .The terms have to be carefully defined and the style neatly polished as the writer and the audiences do not share the same religious and cultural background, nor do they speak the same language.

The author of this book is a professor of English language and literature, who studied in England and the States and claims to have come in contact with the Western mode of thinking for a long time. More important he has been familiar with discussing Islamic issues in English in his capacity as translator in the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Cairo and translator and interpreter in the Islamic conferences convened by the

Organization of Islamic Conference (Summit and Foreign ministers and ministers of Economic Affairs conferences) since 1980.

The author has been well–aware of the defecenices from which most books written on Islam in English suffered. Some of these were translations of Arabic books on Islam. Though most of the translators were faithful to the texts they translated, these texts were not originally addressed to the western readers with their questioning minds and their sceptical and pragmatic attitudes. Nobody should blame the western reader who refuses to take matters of belief for granted and who puts to the test every issue raised. The western reader tends to put the cadaver on the table and dissect it to discover its intrinsic values regardless of any extrinsic issues associated with it. The extrinsic metaphysical issues associated with Islam have to be pushed aside for a time until the intrinsic physical and logical issues are fully accepted and assmilated by the reader.

On the other hand, there are several books written by some authors who are well versed in English language while being quite aware of the western culture either because they are originally British writers or because they belong to English speaking countries, like the Indians and the Pakistanese, or by some Arab authors qualified to write in English. Those may be proficient in English but their knowledge of Islam is regretfully meagre due to diverse reasons.

Therefore this book proposes to discuss in a quiet logical manner issues connected with the belief in Islam, not from a narrow, dogmatic, chauvenistic attitude that

disregards the logic and the merits of the other religions of the world those that are heavenly-inspired and those that are not. We consider Judaism, ,Christanity –being heavenly-inspired religions and those that are not such as Hindiusm, Buddhism and Confucianism against the backdrop of Islam. The logicality, the values and tenets of all these religions are compared objectively with a view to discuss differences and similarities and then to show their ability to guide and motivate man's behaviour on earth and to help him surrender his will to the will of the Creator of the worlds.

Having pleaded our case, establishing the real value of Islam in relation to other religions we proceed to define and explain the five pillars of Islam: Declaring the Oneness of Allah, Praying, Paying alms due "Zakat" Fasting the month of Ramadan and performing Pilgrimage by those who can afford it.
These rituals which comprise the very essence of Islam are explained in brief, simple unequivocal terms to help those who adopt Islam to perform them regularly with utter conviction and in conformity with Allah's will.

The term "Allah" is used in this book to refer to the Supreme Being. It is preferred to god as Allah has neither gender nor plural; in this sense Allah is in accord with the Islamic conception of the Supreme Being; Allah is formed by joining the definite article <u>al</u> (meaning the) with ullah (God). The Qur'an says: "Say: He is Allah, the one! Allah, the eternally besought of all! He begetteth not, nor was begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him". Moreover, Allah, as a term is well-known to the followers of other religions.

This book is divided into three parts:

The first part consists of seven chapters; which deal with Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Islam. The seventh chapter entitled The Religion of All Prophets explains how all prophets from Adam to Mohammad (A.p.p.h.) were Muslims.

The second part consists of five chapters; each deals with one of the five pillars of Islam: Professing the Oneness of Allah, Prayer, Paying Alms Due, Fasting and Pilgrimage for those who can afford it. These are explained in detail to help the Muslim to perform them regularly and accurately.

The third part deals with some Controversial Issues i.e Polygamy, Divorce, Woman's human Rights and terrorism and Islam. Islam since its inception, has been exposed to the severest criticism possible due to misundrestanding its basic tenets and motivations. These misconceptions have to be discussed and investigated with a view to revealing the truth.

This book represents a very humble effort in the over –all attempts to introduce Islam, describe its original tenets and values in a clear, simple, unbiased and unequivocal manner with a view to revealing the truth.

Note

(1) The Quran is consulted and quoted only in historical matters where other religious sources keep silent. The quotations avoid controversial issues, or juxtapose the different views and leave it to the reader to side with the one that carries more logic.

N.B.(A.p.p.h.) stand for Allah's prayers and peace be upon him.

Chapter One

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Judaism

1.1 Definitions

Judaism is the first of the three heavenly revealed religions, Christianity being the second and Islam the third and last. The name Judaism is ascribed to Judah, the son of Jacob (who was called Israel after wrestling with an angel. Jacob or Isreal as he was later called was the son of Isaac; the latter was one of Abraham's eight sons. Judah was nicknamed "Jew "so the claim that Abraham was a Jew is false for how could a grandfather be called after his grandson. A grandson may be called after his grandfather but not the other way round.

Before we proceed with our investigation it may be indispensible to define some commonly misconcieved and deliberately confused terms. Hebrew is generally used nowadays to mean Jew and to refer to the Jewish language and this is a historical mistake. The Bible called Abraham a Hebrew. "And there came one that had escaped, and told Abraham the Hebrew". Hebrew means a man from the other side of the Euphrates. It also pertains Eber,a descendant of Shem. But it could never mean a Jew because as we mentioned above Abraham was not a Jew. Random House Dictionary defines Hebrew as "a member of the semitic peoples inhabiting ancient Palestine and claiming descent from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,"(Israelite).

This last part of the definition is not very accurate as all the descents of Abraham including Ismael and his other seven brothers can be regarded as Hebrew. In this sense Israelite is used nowadays also to mean Jew, though Israel whose original name was Jacob had twelve sons, all were Israelites. Each made a tribe called after his own name.

Judah was one of those sons and his descendants only were called Jews. Therefore we can safely say that all the Jews are Israelites but not all the Israelites are Jews .For instance Prophet Moses was an Israelite but not a jew as he was the son of Omran, the son of Kohath, the son of levi, the son of Israel or Jacob. So his grandfather Levi was brother of Judah the grandfather of the Jews.

From this we can proceed to claim that the term "Hebrew" is a wider umbrella that shelters all those who emigrated with Abraham to Canaan after crossing the Euphrates; it covers the would be Jews four generations after the emigration and the non-Jews as well. The Israelite is a relatively smaller umbrella that covers the twelve sons of Jacob including Judah. Therefore it should be clear by now that Jew, Israelite and Hebrew are not synonyms and great care should be taken to avoid confusing them.

Judaism was relatively a late comer to an area of mighty empires that adopted polytheistic religions. For the Egyptians, Greeks, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Syrians and lesser Mediterranean peoples of the day, each major power had a distinct deity. The storm had a storm – god; the sun a sun- god ,etc. Judaism was a completely different religion. The Jews were monotheists in a polytheistic world and that is why they were regarded in those days as Allah's chosen people before they have gone astray.

Though The Old Testament contains references to gods other than Jehovah or Yahweh, the name the Jews use for god, this does not upset the claim that originally they were monotheists. .A close reading of The Old Testament reveals that these other gods were different from

"Yahweh" in two respects. First, they owed their origin to Him " Gods are Ye, The children of life, the most high of all "(P S 82:6). Second, unlike, Yahweh, they were mortal –"like men ýe shall die "(PS 82:7).

Though the orthodox Jews were monotheists, the influence of the surrounding polytheistic religions in those early days can be seen reflected in their deviations from the right path. The followers of Moses who escaped the dispotism of the Egyptian pharoah after safely crossing the Red Sea, made a golden calf to worship when they settled safe in Sinai. They did that in imitation of the Egyptians they left behind worshipping calf Ibis. The early Jews were also influenced by Greek anthropomorphism. The Greeks used to ascribe to their gods human aspects such as drinking, falling in love, marrying and giving birth to children who may be themselves gods or demi –gods. Besides the gods, there were also godesses. The Jews, by analogy described their god as going to rest after spending six days creating the world. They also imagined Him as a person walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the morning.

They have also –as we mentioned before –referred to god as having minor gods whom He regarded as his children and who share human beings the quality of being mortal. These deviations from the orthodox path of Allah may explain why Allah had to send so many prophets to them to bring them back to the right path but to no avail.

<u>The Quran</u> points out that some of the scholars of the Jews changed the words of the Scriptures deliberately. (1) This may have been done as a result of being exposed to

the pressure of the surrounding cultures or deliberately for heinous reasons.

1.2.The Prophets of the Jews

The trouble with the Israelites is that they thought that they were Allah's chosen people for being monotheists in a world and at a time swarmed with polytheists, the Jews who were their descendants deviated gradually from the right path. Allah first sent them his prophet and messenger Moses with the Torah (The Law-Giver) which contains the ten commandments and followed him with a number of prophets. The Jews tended to disbelieve their prophets, to fabricate stories about their lives that would defame them .in a distorted way. They have gone as far as to kill some of them.

Genesis 9:22-24 portrays Noah as having been drunk to the point of becoming naked in the presence of his grown-up sons. "And Shem and Japhet took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backword and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backword, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him". Solomon was accused not only of having a large harem but also of worshipping the false gods (1Kings 11:9-10). "And the Lord was angry with Solomon ..And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he kept not that which the Lord commanded "In (Exodus 32:4) Aaron, the brother of Moses is accused of having fashioned the golden calf for the Israelites to worship. "And he (Aaron) received their (golden earrings) at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made a golden calf: and they

said, These be thy gods, O Israel which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" Moreover, prophet Lut was accused of incest with his two daughters in Genesis19: 36: "Thus were both the daughters of Lut with child by their father. "Even Judah, the father of the Jews is accused of having incest with Tamar, his daughter–in–law. Judah on his way to Timnath to shear his sheep saw Tamar; he thought her to be a harlot because she had her face covered. (Genesis 38:18) ....And he (Judah) gave her (Signet, bracelet and staff), and came in unto her and she conceived by him" .David is also accused of adultery in (Samuel 11: 4-5) "And David sent messengers ,and took her (The wife Uriah); and she came in unto him, and he lay with her ;for she was purified from her uncleanness; and she returned unto her house. And the woman concieved and sent and told David, and said I am with a child "Thus none of the prophets of the Jews was saved from their abuse. The Holy Qur'an makes this point clear in chapter 5, verse 13 and in chapter 1 verse 61[2].

1.3The Holy Books of the Jews

There are many books "Scriptures "which the Jews regard as secret and sacred for various reasons which will be discussed later. These books unfold their beliefs and reveal the secrets of their creed. Most important among these are The Old Testament and The Talmud.

1.3.1The Old Testament

The Old Testament is sanctified by both the Jews and Christians; it embodies a collection of poems, proverbs,

wise sayings ,tales, myths ,philosophies, legislative rules ,love –poems and elegies .

The Old Testament consists of three parts:

1-The Torah incorporating five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

2-The Books of the Prophets; These are of two categories: Those of the early prophets and the others that relate the life stories of later ones.

3-The Scriptures; these fall into three categories

a-The great writings that comprise the Psalms stating the wise sayings of Soloman and Job .

b-The Five Chronicles making the Song of Songs ,Ragoth, The Elegies of Ermia, Estir and the university and finally.

c-The books relating about Danial, Ezria, Nehmia and the Chronicles of the first and second days of creation.

These Scriptures are acknowledged by the Jews and the Protestants, whereas the Christians of the Catholic Church add to them some other Scriptures including the myths of Estir and Judith which relate the stories of two beautiful women who used their beauty to seduce the rulers in a way so as to relieve their peoples of the injustice from which they suffered.

1.3.2 The Talmud

The Talmud is a collection of verbal Jewish legal rules and traditions. These were collected in 150 A.D by one of the Jewish preists (Rabbi) in a book called Mishnah which means an interpretation of The Torah. However, this book was completed by another Rabbi called Jehova in 216 A.D with additional tales and explanations. These were

published in a book entitled The Gemara. The Mishnah and The Gemara make what we call today The Talmud which occupies a status higher and more important to the Jews than The Torah itself.

1.4 Their Conception of Deity

In a nutshell, the Jews are originally monotheists and followers of a God – revealed book The Torah. But they tended to share minor gods in their worship, however they were anthropomorphists and utilitarians by nature. This may explain the multitude of prophets sent to them to bring them to the right track when they deviated from the correct conception of deity.

They believed that they have a god of their own who is paradoxically fallible, who revolts, loses his temper and repents; he may order his people to steal or deceive other people but he is cruel, tribal and fanatical and destructive even to his own people. He is the god of the descendants of Israel only, enemy to others and is portrayed as walking before them as column of smoke .They regard Ezra as the son of god for being able to restore the "Torah" after being lost . They claim also, that it is he who re-established Solomon's Temple. The Quran refers to
Ezra as Al-Azeyr.

1.5Their Preists

Only the descendants of Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob are eligible to work as priests; they have the right of exegesis and of offering sacrifice. Their leaders are called Rabbis, those enjoy great spiritual authority in the Jewish society, moreover on the secular level they are exempted

from taxes and, are qualified to rule on questions of Jewish law. As they were regarded as the means of gaining god's blessing and forgiveness; some of them, throughout the Jewish history, became more powerful and authoritarian than their own kings.

It is believed that Moses' Torah was lost when the temple of Solomon was first destroyed and ravished by the Babylonians however, when it was rewritten the high priests and Rabbis distorted the word of God and henceforward deserved God's punishment and retribution. (2)

1.6.Their Prophets

Jesus, Christ was the last prophet sent to the Jews to bring them back to the orthodox belief. In their Scriptures, before distorting them, prophecies about the birth of Christ, the stars that would appear in the sky to signal his sacred birth, the time and place when and where he would be born and the fact that he would be born fatherless are clearly stated. Many Jewish scholars were aware of these prophecies and impatiently expected them. This may explain how the true believers of Judaism knew of the birth of Christ and how guided by that star they knew where he was born and advised his mother to take the baby and escape to Egypt as the Roman ruler in those days knew from other malicious Jews of the birth of the king of the Jews as the Scriptures referred to him .For fear of the future rivalry of this assumed king, the Roman ruler ordered all the new –born babies to be slaughtered. Virgin Mary and her baby Jesus managed to escape to Egypt on the back of a donkey accompanied by Joseph ,the carpenter .

As usual with the Jews, of defaming their prophets, mutilating their historiographies and even killing them whenever possible, they accused Virgin Mary of adultery in spite of her chastity and piety and rejected Jesus as an illegitimate son of unknown father. If the Jews had revealed to the Roman ruler the time of Jesus's birth to help annihilate him before he breathed the first gasps of life and fought him during his short life time accusing him of being a bastard, the son of an adultress, it is not surprising that they should attempt to demise him afterwords. Judath, the Jew and one of the disciples of Christ betrayed him to the Roman soldiers for thirty pieces of silver.

Jesus invited his discples to the last supper, for he knew that the time had come for him to pass away. Jesus told his disciples that one of them would betray him. After supper Christ and his disciples dispersed, each stole away in a different direction. Nevertheless Judas Iscariot who was known to the soldiers stopped Jesus and kissed him as in farewell. This kiss was a signal to the soldiers indicating that the kissed person is Jesus. Thus they managed to arrest him. For betraying his master Judas received thirty pieces of silver and Judas' kiss became a symbol of betrayal. The phrase is used nowadays to refer to an act of deception when some person shows love and friendship to another and stabs him in the back.

It is Islam the last of the three revealed religions that attempted to reveal the distortion effected by the Jewish Rabbis upon the word of Allah revealed in Torah and The Old testament The Quran made it clear that these distortions were made deliberately.[1]

The "Mishnah " and the "Gemara " were originally intended as interpretation of "Torah" but gradually they replaced it in the Jewish theology and even gained more sanctity through ages.
These represent a deviation from the true path outlined by Allah Almighty. The Quran says "We provided Moses with the book (the Torah) which served as a guidance to the people of Israel"[3]. Again the Quran says" they (the Jews) deified their monks and rabbis and worshipped them instead of Allah"[4].It tells us that they (the Jews) did that deliberately. "This (the Quran) relates to the people of Israel; most of that they already know and live in "[5].

It is Islam, also, that has redeemed the sanctity and honour of the defamed prophets of the jews. As has been pointed out before, most of these prophets and messengers of Allah were accused by the Jews of committing infamous sins that do not become such pious people who provide the model for human behaviour. The Quran maintains that the Jews were Allah's chosen people to guide their nations to the truth and piety and being as such they cannot be deviant, but they did deviate from the right path.

Notes

(1) Surat Al-Maidah verse (13).

"So, for their breaking their compact, we cursed them and made their hearts hard, they pervert the wordings from their context; and they have forgotten a portion of what they were reminded, and you will not cease viewing some treacherous (act) on their part, except a few of them. Yet be clement and pardon: surely Allah loves the fair doers."

١ –سورة المائدة آية ١٣

" فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِم مِّيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ ونَسُوا حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلاَ تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ إلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِّنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ "

(2) Surat Al-Baqarah verse (61)

"And they were stricken with humiliation and indigence, and they incurred the anger of Allah. That was because they had disbelieved the signs of Allah, and killed the Prophets untruthfully. That was because they disobeyed and were (always) transgressing."

٢ – سورة البقرة آية ٦١

" وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوا وكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ "

(3) Surat Al-Isra verse (2)

"And we brought Musa the Book and made it a guidance to the Seeds of Israil,"

٣ – سورة الإسراء آية ٢

" وَآتَيْنَا مُوسَى الكِتَابَ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ "

(4) Surat Al-Tawbah verse (31)

"They have taken to themselves as Lords, apart from Allah, their doctors and their monks and the Messiah, the son Maryam; and they were in no way commanded to worship (anyone) except One God; there is no god except He; hymmed be He, above whatsoever they associate."

٤ – سورة التوبة آية ٣١

" اتَّخذُوا أحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أرْبَاباً مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إلاَّ لِيَعْبُدُوا إلَهاً وَاحِداً لاَّ إلَهَ إلاَّ هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ "

(5) Surat An-Naml verse (76)

"Surely this Quran narrates to the Seeds of Israil most of that concerning which they differ;"

٥ – سورة النمل آية ٧٦

" إنَّ هَذَا القُرْآنَ يَقُصُّ عَلَى بَنِي إسْرَائِيلَ أكْثَرَ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ "

Chapter Two

Christianity

CHRISTIANITY

2.1 Definition

Christianity is the second of Allah's revealed religions; it was intended to complete Judaism and was therefore addressed to the people of Israel who have gone astray and deviated from the orthodox path of Judaism. [1] More than 800 million people to – day adopt Christianity; Christians, to-day, are divided into three major divisions: Roman Cathloics, Eastrrn Orthodoxes and Protestants [2]. The fact that Christianity which was originally intended as a local religion addressed to a certain people has become a universal one is regarded as a deviation from its orthodox path. Huston Smith succinctly observes "Christianity is basically an historical religion. That is to say, it is not founded primarily in universal principles, but in concrete events, actual historical happenings ". [3]

Christianity is derived from the name of the prophet Jesus Christ, whom Allah sent to the Jews to bring them back to the right path. His very birth was a miracle that should have convinced the Jews to believe in him. Moreover, there are harbingers in The Old Testament that foretell his birth and that he would be born fatherless by Virgin Mary the chaste daughter of Omran. The Quran tells us that he would talk to the people who accuse his mother of adultery while still a few days old baby telling them that he is a messenger of Allah. Nevertheless, very few Jews believed in him, but the majority denied him regarding him as a bastard particularly the high priests who adulterated the word of the Lord [4].

When we try to pin down the biographical details of Jesus' life we are immediately struck and disappointed by the meagre definite information available. We do not know for certain how he looked like, for though The New Testament is about Jesus,

nowhere in it is there a physical description of him. We know that he was born in Palestine during the reign of Herod the Great, probably around 4 B.C in a stable in Bethlehem. He grew up in or near Nazareth, presumably after the fashion of the Jews of the time. He was baptized by John, a dedicated prophet who was electrifying the region with his proclamation of Allah's coming judgement. In his early thirties Jesus had a teaching – healing career which lasted between one and three years largely centered in Galilee. From his birth he incurred the hostility of the Jewish high priests who regarded him as a threat to their religion and their prestige among their people. He also won the enmity and suspicion of Rome which regarded him as a possible rival to its secular authority. However, the religious and secular authorities conspired to get rid of Jesus whom they thought of as the prospective King of the Jew ". This led to his crucifixion in the outskirts of Jerusalem". The Christian sources maintain that Jesus was crucified though he is referred to as the son of God. The Muslim sources-supported by the Quran- claim that being a messenger of Allah, Allah would never foresake his messenger to be thus humiliated, therefore He raised him to His side [5]

2.2 The miracles ascribed to Jesus

As Jesus was sent to the Jews who were known for their materialistic approach, Allah provided his prophet Jesus with many miracles that the Jews may believe in him and follow his guide. The first was to be materialized in his birth, being born fatherless. This miracle has been misconceived to mean that Jesus is the son of Allah (Allah forbids) therefore he is also god. Those who adopt this view refer to the Gospel of John (1:1)"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God ". Jesus is then God according to John 1: 1. Then how many Gods are there? But the other Gospels state

that there is only one God. What does that mean? It is clear that John's Gospel contradicts what is stated in the other Gospels. Consider (Deuteronomy (4:39):" that the Lord is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, there is none else." (Deuteronomy 6:4) "Hear O Israel: the lord our God is one Lord; (Isaiah 43:10-11): ". that ye may know and believe me ,and understand that I am He: before me there was no God formed ,neither shall there be after me .I am the Lord ;and beside me there is no Saviour ";(Isaiah 44.6) "Thus saith the Lord ... I am the first, and I am the last ,and beside me there is no God ''(Isaiah 45 :18): " for thus Saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it ;He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inherited. I am the Lord; and there is none else."

More evidences can be found in <u>The Old Testament</u> about the oneness of Allah and that He alone was the creator and no one else not even Jesus, vide Deuteronomy 4:35; Exodus 8:10;11 Samuel 7.22, 1 Kings 8:25 ;1Chronicles 17: 20 ,Psalms 86: 8; 89:6 and 113: 5; Hosea 13:4; and Zechariah 14:9.

<u>In The New Testament</u> more evidence can be cited. There is in Mark 12: 29 what Jesus himself said "And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord "(I. Corinthians 8.4): "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other god but one "(1 Timothy 2:5): "for there is one God, and mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Consider the expression " the man Christ Jesus. Now the Christian reader can judge for himself either John 1:1 is right and the other verses are wrong. or the other way round.

According to the Gospels Jesus is referred to as a word from God, as we have mentioned. The Holy Quran mentioned this

also in chapter 3 verse 45 "(Remember) when the angles said: "O Mary! verily Allah gives you the glad tidings of a word from Him, will be Messiah Jesus ,the son of Mary , held in honour in this world and the Hereafter ,and of those who are near to Allah". In both Scriptures Jesus is described as a word coming from Allah or belonging to Allah in correspondence with I Corinthians 3:23 " And ye are Christ's and Christ is God's" John's version should have been written: "and the word was God's" not "and the word was God". This could have been a mistake in translation from Aramaic to Greek. In the Greek language Theos is God, but Theou is God's [(6).] This seemingly insignificant mistake in translation may have been used deliberately or in ignorance to misguide the Christians and to accept the idea of the divinity of Jesus and that of Trinity afterwards. The fact that Jesus was called the word of Allah in both Scriptures, refutes the alleged idea of being the son of God in any sense. The creation of Jesus in the womb of Mary was without the agency of a sperm, it was performed just only with the decree of Allah: "Be" as mentioned in the same chapter 3: 47: " she (Mary) said, O, my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me." He said: "So (it will be), for Allah creates what He will. When He has decreed."

The second miracle was that of talking to his people while still a baby in the cradle. In the Quran Jesus says that he does what he does only by the grace of Allah .In the Gospel of John 5:30, Jesus says: "I can of mine own self do nothing ..."in Luke 11:20 he says :"but if I with the finger of God cast out devil , no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you". By the grace of Allah, Jesus fed five thousand people with only five loaves and five fishes, healed leprosy, caused the blind to see again, raised the dead ,walked upon the water and could cast out devils .

But Jesus was not unique in performing miracles; all the miracles performed by Jesus had been done by previous prophets, disciples, and even unbelievers. If Jesus was born without the agency of a father, Adam was created without the agency of either a father or a mother. Elisha, Eligah and Moses did similar miracles without being regarded as sons of Allah. See 11 Kings 4.44,1 Kings 17: 16, 11 Kings 5:14, Kings 6:17, 11 Kings 6:20,11 Kings 6:18,1Kings 17:22, 11 Kings 4:34,11 Kings 13:2, Exodus 14:22, Mathew 12,27 and Luke 11:19.

Some claim that Jesus is God and man, but it should be noted that nowhere in the Bible did he claim that. Indeed he had prophesied that people would worship him uselessly and will believe in doctrines not made by God but by men. (Matthew 15:9): "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men". Jesus cannot be a God as he does not possess the attributes that qualify him to be such one. Allah by His very nature is not born and never dies, and Jesus is born of a mortal human being and dies either on the cross as alleged or elsewhere. Jesus slept while God never sleeps (Psalm 121:4) "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" God is powerful and All-mighty while Jesus was weak and fragile, people spit on him, tortured him and finally crucified him as alleged. Allah does not pray and worship, for to whom should he pray and whom should he worship, while Jesus fell on his face and prayed to Allah as any other mortal being. (Luke 5:16): "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed" ....Jesus was tempted by Satan for forty days (Luke 4:1-13) but in James 1:13 it is said:"... for God cannot be tempted with evil".

Hustom Smith comments succinctly on the divinity of Jesus: "We may begin with the doctrine of Incarnation. Holding as it does that Christ was God-man, simultaneously both fully God

and fully man. To say that such a contention is paradoxical seems a charitable way to put the matter-it looks more like a straight contradiction. If the doctrine held that Christ was half human and half divine, or that he was divine in certain respects while human being in others, our minds would not balk. (The Religions of Man ,p.295)

Logic cannot support Smith, therefore he concludes his argument with the statement: "Whenever we are forced to sacrifice either logic or evidence, it would seem to stick with evidence (p.296).

Huston Smith discusses once again the Christian concept of the Trinity. He writes: "It holds that while God is fully one, he is also three." Then he comments "No concept of Christendom has enjoyed a greater reputation for obscurity than this. The Church itself has confessed it to be a mystery, true but beyond the reach of mind to fathom completely." (P.296)

2.3The Holy Bible

There are four versions of the Bible regarded as accredited gospels. They are the gospels of Luke, Matthew Mark and John ,but there are many other versions which are not considered canonical and are referred to as apocryphal . However, history and research have proved that none of the approved gospels was dictated by Christ, and none of the writers of these gospels was qualified to write such sacred books. Many contradictions can be discovered between these gospels. The gospels rejected as apocrypha are obviously no less authentic than the others and some of them are rejected for suspicious reasons like that of Bernaba.

History has shown that the Bible suffered changes throughout the ages. The Revised Standard Version of 1952 and 1971, the New American Standard Bible and the New world Translation of the Holy Scriptures have expunged certain verses compared with King James version. Reader's Digest has reduced The Old Testament .by fifty percent and the The New Testament was condensed by about twenty –five percent.

As a result of the confusion and contradictions in the Biblical statements many ideas and doctrines have been accepted as part and parcel of Christianity, such as the Trinity, divinity of Jesus Christ, original sin and atonement though none of these is mentioned in the Bible.

"Yes, the Bible is human" writes W. Graham Scroggie of the Holy, Institue, Chicago "though some, out of zeal which is not according to knowledge have denied this" (7. Kenneth Kragg, another erudite Christian scholar, the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem writes "Not so The New Testament ... there is condensation and editings, there is choice, reproduction (and) witness. The Gospels have come through the mind of the Church behind the authors. They represent experience and history" (8)

It is not difficult for any neutral researcher to observe that the Bible contains words that may be described as the Word of God; he will be able also to discern what can be described as the words of a prophet of God" and lastly he will observe that the bulk of the Bible is the records of eye witnesses ear witnesses ,or people writing from hearsay. As such they are the "Words of a historian". Ahmed Deedat provides quotations from the Bible to exemplify each category:

The First Type (Word of God)

I will raise them up a prophet … and I will put my words in … and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him"
(Deuteronomy 78:28)

Note the first person pronoun singular in the above reference; and without any difficulty you will agree that the statement seems to have the sound of being God's words .

The Second Type (the words of the prophet)

(Jesus) cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachtani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou fonesaken me? (Matthew 27:46) these are the words of the one to whom they are attributed i.e. the words of a prophet of God .

This Third Type (the words of a historian)

"And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he (Jesus) came ,if haply he (Jesus) might find anything thereon : and when he (Jesus) came to it ,he (Jesus) found nothing but leaves"(Mark 11:13). These are the words of a third person . Note the underlined pronouns. They are not the words of God or of his prophet but the words of a historian.

2.4 Christian Sects

There are three major Christian sects; originally there was the Roman Catholic Church which remained dominant till the eleventh century, when a second sect appeared; the third came into existence in the 16 th century.

In 1054 the Christian Church was divided into two major sects:

1- Roman Church which is centered in the Vatican in Rome and dominates central and northern Europe, Ireland, and South America.

2-Eastern Orthodox Church with its main followers in Greece, the Slavic countries, Russia, Egypt, Ethiopia and Middle East.

3-Protestantism came into existence in the 16 Th century and has its major followers in Northern Europe, England, and North America. Now-a-days there are more than 250 minor sects in U.S.A alone.

The conclusion is that the four accredited gospels are only man –written books, therefore they are fallible and can never be claimed to be God –inspired. They are written by unknown persons in unknown places and at unidentified dates. The only thing that a keen observant reader discerns as well as the simple layman is that these gospels are different; moreover they are contradictory and some are refuted by universal data.

2.5 Notes

(1) Jesus himself said that he was sent only to the people of Israel (Matthew 15:24): "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" Also (Matthew 1: 21)"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins". He even said that he came not to make things but to fulfill (Matthew 5:12-18)" Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one job or one title shall in no wise pass from the law ,till all fulfilled".

(2) The world population has increased by 136% from 1934 through 1984, Christianity with 47% and Islam with 35% . See The Plain Truth, February 1984 in its 50 year anniversary issue ,quoting from The World Almanae and Book of Facts 1935 and Reader's Digest Almanac and Year Book1983.

(3) Huston Smith The Religions of Man (New York, Mentor Books, 1959), p.274.

(4) Surat Maryam: 27-35
"Then she came up with him to her people carrying him. They said, "O Maryam, indeed you have readily come with a fabricated thing. O sister of Harun, your father was in no way a woeful person, and your mother was in no way a prostitute. So she pointed to him. They said, "How shall we speak to one who is (still) in the cradle, (a young boy)"? He said: "Surely I am the bondman of Allah; He has brought me the Book and made me a Prophet. And he has made me blessed, wherever I may be, and He has enjoined upon me prayer and Zakat as long as I am alive. And ever benign to my parent; and He has not made me arrogant, wretched. And peace be upon me, the day I was begotten and the day I die, and the day I am made to rise again alive. That is Isa, son of Maryam, in word of truth, concerning which they are wrangling. In no way is it for Allah to take to Him a child. Humned be He! When He decrees a command, then He only says to it "Be" and it is".

سورة مريم "١٩ "الآيات من ٢٧ _٣٥

"فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئاً فَرِياًّ (٢٧) يَا أُخْتَ هَـارُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُـوكِ امْـرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكِ بَغِياًّ (٢٨) فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَن كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِياًّ (٢٩) قَالَ إِنِّـي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِياًّ (٣٠) وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكاً أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلاَةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَـا دُمْتُ حَياًّ (٣١) وَبَراًّ بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّاراً شَقِياًّ (٣٢) وَالسَّلامُ عَيَّ يَوْمَ وَلِدتُّ وَيَـوْمَ أَمُـوتُ

وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَياً (٣٣) ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلَ الحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ (٣٤) مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَن يَتَّخِـــذَ مِن وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَى أَمْراً فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ (٣٥)"

(5) Surat An-Nisaa: 157:158

"That they said (in boast)"We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah" but they killed him not, nor crucified him. Only a likeness of that was shown to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge. But only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not: Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is exalted in power, wise".

(٥)سورة النساء آية ١٥٧ –١٥٨

" وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا المَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِـــن شُـــبِّهَ لَـــهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّـــذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مَا لَهُم بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلاَّ اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِيناً (١٥٧) بَل رَّفَعَـــهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزاً حَكِيماً (١٥٨) "

(6) See Abdul Ahad Dawud, Muhammed in The Bible, P.16 Professor Dawud was formerly a bishop of Uramiah.

(7) Dr .W. Graham Scroggie, Is The Bible The Word of God? P.17.Dr. Scroggie is a member of the most prestigious Christian Evanglical Mission in the world.

(8) Kenneth Kragg, The Call of the Minaret P.277.

Chapter Three

Hinduism

Hinduism

3.1 Definition

Hinduism is a pagan religion, adopted by most of the people of India, which has taken form through a long process starting from the15th century B.C. It is a religion that comprises the spiritual and moral values side by side with the legal and regulatory principles taking different gods for each area of activity;i.e each activity or phenomenon has a god of its own.

3.2 Background

India was originally inhabited by negroes who had their primitive ideas and beliefs till the fifteenth century B.C. When the Aryan invaders came to India; they were influenced by the beliefs of the countries they passed by, so when they settled in India, their beliefs mixed with those Indian beliefs which resulted in Hinduism, a religion containing primitive ideas about worshipping nature, forefathers and cows in a special way.

In the eighth century B.C. Hinduism became more developed when the Brahmic school was set and forced the worship of Brahma. Hinduism was strongly devastated by two powerful movements namely Jeenism and Buddhism. However the rules of Menu restored power to Hinduism in the third century B.C.

Whereas the idea of Trinity was transferred from Hindu thought to the Christian one, the idea of transmigration of souls and embodiment of the spirit of god in man and the unity of creation was transferred to some Muslims who have gone astray. This appeared in the beliefs of some Sophists

and the Ismaelites and some deviant sects such as Muhammadanism.

3.3 Leading Figures

There is no well-known founder for Hindu religion nor are there known authors for its books; as most of these books were composed gradually over a long period of history . However, it is known that the early Aryan settlers who invaded India in the 15th century B.C. were the early founders of Hinduism. When the Aryans came to India with their Hinduism, the early Indians had their own ancient religion and the two religions mixed up forming a new one.

In the eighth century B.C. Hinduism took a new form and developed by the help of Brahmas who believed that they were godly in some way. Hinduism developed for the second time in the third century B.C. as a result of the laws of Menoshaster.

Hinduism can be understood through its books, conception of god, beliefs and views with regard to some intellectual, philosophical and social issues.

3.4 First: Books.

There are many books on Hinduism; all of them are difficult to understand being written in strange language; many books have been written to explain them, and others to summarize their exegeses. All are considered sacred;

1-Weeda: This is a book that describes the life of the Aryans and follows the ascension of the spiritual life from the stage of naivity to that of philosophical sublimity. The book ends

with prayers that starts with doubts and suspicion but gets promoted until one realizes the unity of creation. It consists of four chapters, each is called a book as well; these are.

1-1 Reej-Weeda: this dates back to three thousand years B.C. and refers to the gods and their names: the god of gods Andra, the god of fire Agna, the godess Varona and the god of the sun Sorya.

1-2 Yajor Weeda: this comprised the prayers recited by the monks while offering sacrifices.

1-3 Sama weeda: this is recited during the prayers and celebrations.

1-4 Athar Weeda: this chapter consists of a number of essays and prayers that protect against magic, evil and devils.

Each of these Chapters (books) consists of four parts:

a-<u>Samhta</u>: This deals with the sect of the instinct followers and its prayers which were offered by the ancient inhabitants of India to their gods before the Arayan invasion.

b-<u>The Brahmans</u>: This was introduced by the Brahmans to identify the different kinds of sacrifices.

c-<u>Araniak</u>: These were the prayers of their seniors which were practised while inhabiting the caves, the woods and the wastelands.

d-<u>Abavishadat</u>: this comprised the secrets and the psychological experiences of their sophists.

2-<u>The Second important book is called Rules (Menu)</u>

Rules (Menu): These rules were established three centuries B.C. in the second weedy age; the age of the victory of

Hinduism on the theism found in Buddhism. These rules explain "The Weedas", identifying the main aspects, principles and bases of Hinduism.

3-Maha Bahart: this is an Indian epic similar to the Greek Illiad and Odyssey written by Opass in 1950 B.C. It describes a war between the members of the royal family; gods participate in this war supporting one side against the other.

4-Keeta: This book describes the dispute between the princesses of one royal family; Kreshna who participates in this war expresses his philosophical and social views while commenting on its events.

5-Yoja: This contains sixty-four thousand verses that have been composed over a long period starting from the sixth century B.C. by a number of anonymous authors, The verses handle some philosophical and theological issues.

6-Arama Yanaa: This book handles a number of political and constitutional views and comprises some of the speeches of a king called Rama.

3.5 Second: The Hindu Conception of Deity

Monotheism: There is no monotheism in the literal sense of the word in Hinduism. However, if they adopt one of their gods, they would devote themselves to him hole-heartedly to the disregard of other gods. This god they would call the god of gods.

Polytheism: They believe that every phenomenon has two aspects –one is beneficial and the other harmful and each

would have a god to be worshipped such as water, air, rivers and mountains .All these are gods to which they pray and beseech for help by offering sacrifices.
-Trinity: In the nineth century B.C. the priests tried to unify all the gods in one god that has three aspects which they called:

- -Brahama: Being a creator.
- -Fishno: Being a preserver.
- -Seifa: Being an annihilator.

According to them he who worships any of these three gods has worshipped them all and there is no difference between them. It is also believed that the Christians obtained their idea of trinity from this source, through Paul the Messenger.

All the Hindus consecrate the cow. The Hindus believe also that the spirits of their gods have been embodied in the form of a man called Kreshna. Kreshna is both man and god according to them. Sheikh Muhammad Abu-Zahrah made a very interesting comparison between Kreshna and the Christians' conception of Messiah; he discovered that they are identical .His eminence Abo-zahrah concluded his comparison asking the Christians to look for the origins of their religion not in the Bible but rather in Hinduism. Consider the Christian belief in incarnation and the concept of Trinity.

3.6 Third: The Hierarchical Order in Hindu Society: Social, Intellectual and Philosophical issues:

Since the Aryans arrived to India, they have formed classes which are still existing to the present day and it is too difficult to be eleminated as they believe that they are god –

created classes. These classes were mentioned in Rules (Menu) as follows:

1-The Brahmas – they are created by the god Brahma from his mouth; among them are the teachers, priests and the judges. All people resort to them in cases of marriage and death and it is not permissible for anyone to offer sacrifices but in their presence.

2- The Kashter: they are created by god from his arms: they have the right to learn, make sacrifices and carry arms for defence.

3-The Waish: They are created by god from his thigh: they cultivate the land, buy and sell, collect money and spend on the religious institutes.

4- The Shudre: They are created by god from his legs; and they with the original negroes compose the dejected class. They are responsible for serving the previous three noble classes and work in the dirty, mean jobs.

Everybody is subject to this hierarchical system from a religious point of view. It is not lawful for a man to marry a woman belonging to a higher class. It is lawful for a man to marry a woman from a lower class on condition that she shouldn't be one of the Shudre.

Brahmas are the elite and are placed side by side with god; they have the right to take whatever they want from the fortunes of their Shudre slaves.The Brahmy who writes the scripture is a forgivable man even if he destroys the three worlds with his sins. It is not permissible for the King even in hardships to collect money or taxes from a Brahmy. In

case a Brahmy deserves to be killed, it is not lawful for the ruler to do this but to cut his hair while in smiliar situations, others may be sentenced to death. It is not legal for a Brahmy to die starving in his country.

The dejected are below cattle in rank and more humiliated than dogs. (according to Menu law). It is great pleasure for the dejected to serve the Brahmas without any reward or wages.If anyone of the dejected put out his hand or stick to hit a Brahmy, his hand should be cut off; and if he kicks him, his leg would be cut off, too. If any of the dejected wants to sit down in the presence of a Brahmy or shows any desire to do so, it is incumbent upon the king to burn his buttock and banish him away from the country. If anyone of the dejected claimed that he teaches a Brahmy, he would be forced to drink boiling oil. The atonement of killing a dog, a cat, a toad, a blackbird and a man of the dejected is the same.

3.7 Fourth : Their Beliefs:

Their beliefs become clear in the Karma, transmigration of souls and the unity of creation.

1-The-Karma "punishment law" claims that the system of the universe is a heavenly system based on pure justice. This justice will be fulfilled either in this life or in the Hereafter and the reward of this life will be in another life. This life is a world of examination and a world of punishment and reward as well.

2-Transmigration of souls: If a man dies, his body would vanish and his soul would be incarnated in the body of

someone else according to what he has done in his first life; thus the spirit starts a new course of life.

3-The Ascension: good deeds and bad deeds result in a new life in which a soul may be rewarded or punished according to what it has previously done in its first course of life. Those who neither wish for anything nor long for anything and have freed themselves from the slavery of carnal instincts will not be returned to life again but their spirits will ascend and get united with the Brahmas.

4-The unity of creation: The Hindus believe that man can create ideas, systems and institutions which he can preserve or destroy. Thus man and god become one and man's spirit becomes the actual creating strength. Spirit has some of the attributes of god in the sense that it is eternal, old and continuous not created.

The relationship between man and gods is the same as the relationship between a spark and fire and that between the seed and tree. This universe is just a reflection of the original macrocosm and the human spirit is a part of the godly one.

3.8 Fifth: Ideas and Other Beliefs

Bodies are cremated after death as this helps spirits to ascend vertically to reach the upper Heavens in a short period of time. Moreover, cremation helps the spirit to be delivered absolutely from the body. When the spirit is delivered of the body and ascends up to heavens, it faces three worlds:

a-the upper world: b-the world of angels or joins one of the human world i.e. the world of humans through incarnation, or c-Hell and this is for sinners and wrong doers. There is not only one fire but a special hellfire for every wrong doer. Ressurection in the hereafter is not for bodies but for spirits.

A woman whose husband dies never marries again but lives in a state of celibacy and continuous hardship; she becomes a subject of mockery and ridicule and is reduced to a rank lower than that of a servant. A women may burn herself alive immediately after her husband's death to avoid the expected torture she will have in her life .By law this act was forbidden in modern India.

Hinduism makes it allowable for children to be married while they are still infants and it happens that the child may die so the girl becomes a widow at an early age. But the modern Indian law forbids this act and prohibits marriage till the age of puberty.

There is no importance for anyone unless he is a member in a group which by turn should be a member in a larger group. This is because the care is only for the community rather than for the individual.

3.8 Areas of Influence and Domination

Hinduism dominates almost the Indian sub-continent where it spreads in different areas with different concentrations. Great differences can be discovered between the Muslims and the Hindus with regard to their views of

the universe, life and cow which the Hindus worship and the Muslims slaughter and eat its meat. These differences in views and beliefs caused many conflicts which resulted virtually in the emergence of the state of Pakistan where most of the Muslims live. The Indian state remained with its majority of Hindus and the Muslims represent a minority though of a large population of their own.

Chapter Four

Buddhism

4.1 Definition

4.2 Foundation and Leaders

4.3 Ideas and Beliefs of Buddhism

4.4 The Books of Buddhism

4.5 The Ideological Roots

4.6 Areas of Influence

4.1 Definition

Buddhism is one of the religions that appeared in India in the fifth century B.C.; originally it was directed to man essentially as a human –being regardless of all other accessories connected with his physiology. It is a call for sophism, rough life and rejection of luxury and material life. It also inspires man to do good and to extend love and toleration to others. However, after the death of its founder, its views were dogmatised and were tainted with pagan aspects; moreover, its followers elevated its founder to a status of god.

4.2 Foundation and Prominent Leaders:

Buddhism was founded by Madharta Guatama Buddha (560 –480) B.C. The word Buddha literally means the scientist and it also means the one who devotes himself to a cause. Buddha was brought up in a small town on the borders of Nepal; he was a prince who enjoyed a very comfortable life and married at the age of eighteen. At the age of twenty-six, he deserted his wife and devoted himself to a life of hardships and seclusion spending most of his time contemplating mystical questions, the creation of the universe and spiritual sublimation. His main quest was to deliver man from his pains which were originally created by his physical lusts. Moreover, he called upon people to follow his example and many did. Originally the word Buddha is used to refer to a person who attained full prajna or enlightenment. In the Sanskrit root budh denotes both to wake up and to know.

4.3 Ideas and Beliefs

The Buddhists believe that Buddha is a son of God; he is the deliverer of humanity of its miseries and pains and he

also bears their sins. The Buddhists also believe that Buddha is the off- spring of Vergin Maya and he incarnates the holy spirit. It was told that the birth of Buddha was indicated by the appearance of a star they call Buddha star. They claimed that when Buddha was born, the soldiers of heaven rejoiced and the angels recited the poems of love to the new-born baby. They claimed that the wise recognized Buddha and understood the secrets of his religion and that hardly a day passed since he was born without being greeted by common people. Buddha said to his mother while still a child –they claim –that he was the greatest of all men.

They claimed that Buddha once entered one of the temples where all the idles kneeled before him whereas Satan tried to deviate him to no avail. They believe that in his last days Buddha's shape changed and a halo surrounded his head and flashes of great light emanated from his body; those who saw him explained that this could not be but a God. The Buddhists pray to Buddha believing that he would admit them into paradise. Prayers are done in congregations attended by great numbers of his followers. When Buddha died ,his followers claimed that he ascended with his body to heaven after completing his job on earth .They believe that Buddha will come back to earth to spread peace and happiness among people .

It is held that Buddha is a great immortal being responsible for judging people's deeds in the afterworld. Buddha set obligatory rituals to be performed by people till the day of Judgement. Buddha founded a religious Kingdom on earth after him. Some of the researchers maintain that Buddha rejected the idea of deity and human soul and believed in transmigration.

The teachings of Buddha call for love, toleration, good behaviour, charity, abandoning richness and luxury while forcing oneself to lead a harsh and tough life. He also warns against women and money inviting people to avoid matrimony.

Buddhists are divided into two major categories:

A- The orthodox Buddhists who follow the teachings and recommendations of Buddha dogmatically.

B- And the secular Buddhists who follow some of these teachings and recommendations only. However, all people are equal according to Buddhism; nobody enjoys any superior status but by the help of the knowledge he possesses and his ability to control his carnal desires.

4.4 The Books of Buddhism:

The Buddhists do not claim to have any sacred books or any books that come closer to that status. However, their books can be classified into three groups: the first contains the rules and beliefs of Buddhism; the second comprises the speeches delivered by Buddha; the third are the books that explain the bases and the origin of Buddhism.

4.5 The Ideological Roots of Buddhism

There is nothing to prove that Buddhism had taken its roots from previous religions; nevertheless, some similarities can be discovered between Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism and Christianity. Like Hinduism, Buddhism believes in transmigration and a quest for sophism. And like Confucianism, it cares for man and his delivery from pain.

It cannot also be ignored that there are great similarities between the circumstances related about the birth of Jesus and his life and the views he believed in "as claimed" and those of Buddhism. This makes clear that Christianity has borrowed much from Buddhism.

4.6 Areas of Influence:

Buddhism is dominant in many Asian countries and here we notice that there are two major sects:

A- The Northern sect dominates China, Japan, Tebet, Nepal and Somatra; the sacred books of this sect are written in Sanskrit.

B- The Southern sect spreads in Burma, Cylan and Siam; the sacred books are written in Bali.

Chapter Five

Confucianism

5.1 Definition

5.2 Prominent Figures

5.3 Basic Beliefs

5.4 Areas Where Confucianism Spreads

5.1 Definition:

Confucianism is the religion of the ancient Chinese named after the great philosopher Confucius who appeared in the sixth century B.C calling for the revival of the religious values and traditions which the Chinese inherited from their fore- fathers. To these values he added his own philosophy and moral values leading to sound behaviour. Confucianism is a religion that calls for worshipping the great God of Heaven, consecrating angels and adoring the spirits of the fathers and fore –fathers.

5.2 Prominent Figures:

First comes Confucius, the first leader, who is regarded as the real founder of this Chinese religion. He was born in 551 B.C in Tsou, one of the cities of the principality Lu (now called Shantung province). Originally, he was called Kung Futze ;Kung is the name of the tribe to which he belongs and Futze means the president or the philosopher , thus his name meant the president of Kung or the philosopher of that tribe . However, he belongs to a very aristocratic family that had deep roots and respected history in that area. His grandfather was ruler of the province and his father was an excellent military officer. Nevertheless, he himself was the offspring of an illegal marriage and his father died before he was three leaving his up- bringing to a wonderful but impoverished mother. Thus, he lived as an orphan, worked as a shepherd and married at an early age before he was twenty. Before divorcing his wife, she got him a boy and a girl but she could not continue living with him for more than two years due to his meticulous manners with regard to food, drinks and clothes.

Confucius studied philosophy with professor Laotse who believed in contentment and absolute tolerance. Nevertheless, Confucius disagreed with his professor later on when the latter called for "an eye for an eye" to maintain justice.

At the age of twenty two, he established a school for studying the essences of philosophy; his students increased in number till they reached three thousand, eighty of them distinguished themselves in dexterity and intelligence.

Confucius, who had supreme confidence in his ability to reorder society, held a number of important jobs; he worked as consultant to princes and governors, was appointed judge and governor, minister of labour and minister of justice and finally prime minister in 496 B.C. In his capacity as prime minister he sentenced some ex-ministers and some politicians and riot-makers to death; thus making his province ideal with regard to applying his philosophical values and ideas.

Confucius afterwards devoted his time to making trips to the various cities and towns of China offering his wisdom and consultation to the rulers and inviting people to adopt his values of sound moral traditions. Finally, he resorted to his province Lu where he devoted most of his time to teaching his friends, summarizing the books of the ancients and introducing them to the people. He died in 479B.C. at the age of 73 leaving a formal and popular religious attitude which continued in power to the middle of the twentieth century .His manner of teaching was informal and Socratic and was a one –man university.

5.3 The Basic Beliefs:

The Basic beliefs of Confucianism with Regard to God, Angels and the Spirits of their Ancestors:

God: They believe in the great God, the Lord of Heaven Whom they worship and to Whom they offer sacrifices. However, these sacrifices are to be submitted through the mediation of the King or the princes of the different governorates. The earth has also a God worshipped by all the Chinese and so have the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds and the mountains and to each sacrifices are to be offered.

Angels occupy a very high position in the Chinese religion; they are consecrated and sacrifices are offered to them as well.

The spirits of the ancestors are also consecrated by the Chinese; they believe in the immortality of these spirits and that they never die with the death of the bodies. The sacrifices offered to these spirits are given in celebrations where large banquets are extended accompanied by music to help spirits rejoice and feel happy. In every house, there is a small temple for the spirits of the dead and the Gods of the householders.

Confucianism does not believe in the hereafter or in paradise or hell, neither do they believe in resurrection. Confucianists were mainly concerned with improving their life affairs regardless of the destiny of the spirits after leaving the dead bodies. One of the disciples once asked Confucius about death, Confucius answered succinctly "we haven't yet finished studying life to delve into the question of death".

Confucianism is mainly concerned with moral values which form the cornerstone of its philosophy and the basis of its religion. Its tends to teach the individual to absorb these values until they become part and parcel of his very being. These values can be materialized in absolute obedience to parents, elder brothers and rulers. These moral values also include sincerity to friends, refusal to cause any harm to others even in words , identical harmony between words and deeds, rejection of hypocrisy , care for common interest ,encouraging beneficial arts , sympathizing with foreigners and working for the common welfare of the princes and the common people of the empire.

5.4 Areas Where Confucianism Spreads:

Confucianism started in China originally but in 1949 when China adopted the Communist regime, Confucianism was prohibited like other religions by the force of law. However, it continued its domination in Furmoza which remained far from the reach of the communist control; moreover, it spreads in Korea and Japan where it is studied in universities as the major basis for moral values there. Confucianism was highly appreciated by western philosophers like Lipnze (1646-1716) and Peter Noyel who published The Classics of Confucius in 1711. Most of the books of Confucianism were translated into many European languages.

Chapter Six

Islam

Islam

6.1 Definition

Islam is derived from the word Salam which means primarily "peace", but in a secondary sense "surrender", "its full connotation is the "perfect peace that comes when one's life is surrendered to God..' The corresponding adjective is Muslim". Some western scholars tend to refer to Islam as Mohammadanism; this is inaccurate and offensive. Muhammad (A.p.p.h.) was neither the originator nor the shaper of Islam; he was merely the prophet through whom that religion was revealed. From the Islamic perspective, Allah has chosen this religion for all human beings from the days of Adam till dooms day. Muhammadanism was absolutely unknown to the followers of that religion neither was it mentioned in the Holy Quran or in the sayings of the Holy Prophet. In fact, as will be pointed out later, every prophet and messenger is spoken of in the Quran as being a Muslim.

Islam is the last of the three heavenly-inspired religions, Judaism being the first and Christianity the second. Islam is an all-inclusive religion which contains within itself all the religions which went before it. One of its most striking features is that it requires its followers to believe that all the great religions that preceded it have been revealed by Allah Almighty. It is a fundamental principle of Islam that a Muslim must also believe in all the prophets who were sent to nations before Muhammad (A.p.p.h.) The Holy Quran enjoins the believers:

> **"Say: we believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us and in that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and**

> Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them."(Surat Al-Baqara, verse 136)

A Muslim, therefore, is one who believes in the prophets, the Holy books and Scriptures of all nations. A Jew believes only in the prophets of Israel; a Christian believes in Jesus Christ and in a lesser degree, in the prophets of Israel and so do the followers of the other religions; but a Muslim believes in all these and in Muhammad (A.p.p.h) also, the last and the seal of the prophets.

Islam is not only the last religion of the world and an all-inclusive one, it is also the perfect expression of the Divine will. Thus Allah Almighty says:-

> "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion." (Surat Al Ma'ida (The Table) verse 3)

Maulana Muhammad Ali says that like every other form of consciousness, the religious consciousness of man has developed slowly and gradually down the ages, and the revelation of the great Truth from on high was thus brought to perfection in Islam. It is to this great truth that the words of Jesus Christ allude: "I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John 16:12,13). Thus it is the great mission of

Islam to bring peace in the world by establishing a brotherhood of all the religions of the world. [1]

Islam, unlike other religions, cares for man's life on earth and in the hereafter. Man is not required to sacrifice his life on earth for the sake of a life in the other world. Islam deals not only with the ways of devotion, with the forms of worship of the Divine Being, with the means which make man attain communion with Allah, but also and in richer detail with the problems of the world around us, questions of relations between man and man, man and woman, his social and political life, institutions of marriage, divorce and inheritance, the division of wealth and the relations of labour and capital, the administration of justice, military organizations, peace and war, national finance, debts and contracts, rules for the service of humanity and even of dumb creations, laws for the help of the poor, the orphan and the widow and hundreds of other questions, the propre understanding of which enables man to lead a happy life.

6.2 The Prophet of Islam Muhammad (A.p.p.h) The Seal of the Prophets

Abraham (peace be upon him) had two wives Sarah and Hagar. From Hagar he had Ismael and Sara bore him a son named Isaac. Ismael and his mother went to Mecca and his descendants, growing up in Arabia, became Muslims whereas those of Isaae who remained in Palestine were Jews.

Following the line from Ismael in Arabia we come eventually in the latter half of the sixth century A.D. to

Muhammad (A.p.p.h) the prophet through whom Islam emerged.

Muhammed (A.p.p.h) came to a world which is rightly described as barbaric. Political chaos, social corruption, animistic polytheism, blood-shedding for the most trivial reasons were the dominant features of Arabia, including Mecca at that time. The time was ripe for a deliverer.

Muhammad was born into the leading tribe of Mecca, Koreish in approximately 571 A.D. He came to be called Muhammad which means "The highly praised." His early life was cradled in tragedy, for his father died a few days before he was born, his mother when he was six, and his grandfather, who cared for him after his mother's death, when he was nine. Thereafter he was taken into his uncle's home. Though the latter's declining fortunes forced the young orphan to work hard minding his uncle's flocks, he was warmly accepted in his new home. We are told that while away in the open desert an angel came down, opened his heart and filled it with light.

Muhammad grew up to be loved and respected by all those who came in touch with him. He was of sweet and gentle disposition. His sense of honour straightforwardness and fidelity won him the title of "The Trustworthy One." Though Muhammad cared for the others, particularly the poor and the needy, he remained removed in outlook and ways, isolated in the midst of an effete and chaotic society. Silently, broodingly, his thoughts turned inward.

At the age of twenty-five, Muhammad worked for a wealthy widow named Khadija. Khadija was highly impressed by his honesty and integrity and proposed

marriage to Muhammad. Though she was fifteen years his senior, he responded to her offer and they got married. The mateh proved happy in every respect. Khadija kept by his side in the most desolate hours, consoling him and keeping alive hope's thin flame.

From the age of twenty-five to that of forty Muhammad was prepared for receiving the great mission of Islam. He used to resort to a cave at the outskirts of Mecca, where he would, in absolute solitude, contemplate matters of life and death, peering into the mysteries of good and evil, unable to accept the crudeness, superstition and fratricide that were accepted as normal in his society.

In the midist of the darkness of the cave and through vigils often lasting the entire night, Allah's reality gradually became for Muhammad increasingly evident and impressive. The God whose majesty overflowed a desert cave to fill all heaven and earth was surely not a god or even the greatest of gods. He was what His name literally claimed: the God, Allah, One and only One without rival.

While alone in the cave, in the month of Ramadan, Muhammad heard a call, it was the same command that had fallen earlier on Abraham, Moses, Isaac and Jesus. Wherever, whenever this call comes its form may differ but its essence is the same. This was the Night of Power (Laylat Al-Qadre) in the midist of which the Quran was revealed to a ready soul. As he lay on the floor of the cave, his mind locked in deepest contemplation, a voice commanded Muhammad to read. Twice the voice commanded and Muhammad resisted wishing nothing so

much as to escape from the over-whelming presence. "Read," commanded the voice for the third time.

"I can't read (being illiterate) responded Muhammad in terror. The answer came back:

> Read in the name of thy Lord who createth/ Createth man from a clot
> Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous who teacheth by the pen
> Teacheth man that which he knew not.
> (The Quran: Surat Al Alaq (the Clot) verse, 96)

Coming to himself, Muhammad went home and told Khadija of what he had heard. After some contemplation, Khadija said: "Rejoice O dear husband, and be of good cheer, Thou wilt be the Prophet of this people."[(2)] Muhammad asked Khadija to cover him heavily as he felt feverish. Again came the command, "O thou, inwrapped in thy mantle, arise and warn, and glorify thy Lord." Muhammad's life from that time forth was no longer his own. He was commanded to preach the religion of Islam with unswerving purpose in the face of relentless persecution, insult and outrage.

From the very beginning Muhammad (A.p.p.h) was careful to point out that he was neither the originator nor the shaper of Islam. "God has not sent me to work wonders. He has sent me to preach to you. My Lord be praised! Am I more than a man sent as an apostle."[(3)] From first to last he resisted every impulse to glamourize his person. "I never said that Allah's treasures are in my hand, that I knew the hidden things, or that I was an angel.... I am only a preacher of God's words, the bringer

of God's message to man-kind.[4] The only one miracle that Islam brought was the Quran.

The reaction to the message was violently hostile for almost three reasons: economic, moral and social. Its uncompromising monotheism threatened the considerable revenue that was coming to Meccan leaders from Bedouin pilrimages to Mecca's three hundred sixty shrines (one for every day of the lunar year). The moral teachings of Islam demanded an end to the licentiousness which Meccan citizens were disinclined to give up. Islam also insisted that in the sight of the Lord all men were equal, this was completely unacceptable to a society riven with social distinctions and unjust economic order.

Muhammad (A.p.p.h) and his followers were exposed to barbarie persecution. They were pelted with stones, beaten with sticks, thrown in prison, and starved by refusing to sell them food. A favourite form of torture was to expose them to the burning heat of the desert where parched by thirst they would be offered the alternative of adoring idols and abjuring Islam or death.

Despite all forms of persecution, the followers of Muhammad (A.p.p.h) adhered to the new prophet with a loyalty and devotion seldom paralleled in world history. "Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep and waged a moral conflict with heathenism" wrote William Muir, a scholar whose words assume added weight because he was on the whole a severe critic of Islam, "had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life- the like faith that suffered sacrifices and took joyfully the spoiling of goods for conscience, sake".[5] Slowly but steadily the numbers of the followers of Islam increased. By the end of a decade several hundred families were

acclaiming that Muhammad was Allah's authentic messenger and spokesman.

6.2.1 The Migration to Yathrib (Medina)

The year 622 was a turning point in the history of Islam and perhaps of the whole world, and it is the year in which Hijra calender starts. Haijra is the Arabic word for migration, meaning the flight (to Medina). By this time the Meccan nobility was thoroughly alarmed. They realized that Muhammad's call for Islam was a serious revolutionary movement that was threalening their very existence. They were determined to silence the fiery troublemaker forever.

In the meantime the Prophet received delegations inviting him to migrate with his followers to Yathrib, a city some two hundred miles to the north of Mecca. Muhammad (A.p.p.h) agreed to flight, however, the Meccan leaders tried everything in their power to prevent his going. At last the Prophet and his followers entered Yathrib warmly received by most of its citizens who welcomed him as the Prophet and deliverer. Yathrib soon changed its name to Al Medina Al Menaware, the "Illuminated City". Huston smith refers briefly to the changes that had overtaken the personality of the Prophet.

> From the moment of his arrival at Medina, Muhammad assumes a different role. From prophecy he is rocketed into administration. The despised preacher becomes a masterful politician, the prophet is transformed statesman. We see him now as the king not merely of the hearts of a handful of

devotees but of the collective life of a city, its judge and general as well as its teacher. [6]

Eight years after his migration from Mecca, Muhammad (A.p.p.h) who had left a fugitive returned almost unopposed as a conqueror. The city that had treated him cruelly now lay at his feet with its old prosecutors at his mercy. He refused, however, to press his victory; in the hour of his triumph the past was forgotten. The whole city was converted into Islam, but Muhammad (A.p.p.h) returned to Medina.

Two years later, in 632 A.D.(10.A.H) Muhammad (A.p.p.h) died with vitually all of Arabia under his control, with all the power of armies, police, and civil service; no other Arab had ever succeeded in uniting his countrymen as he did. By the time a century had passed, his followers had conquered Armenia, Persia, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, and Spain, and had crossed the Pyrenees into France.

Rarely is the name of Muhammad (A.p.p.h) mentioned without the benediction "Allah's prayers and peace be upon him" This materializes the great love, admiration and respect the devout Muslim feels for his Prophet. This is an impressive fact unparalleled in religious history.

6.3 The Sources of Islam

It is unanimously acknowledged by all Muslims that Islam has four sources: the Quran and Sunna (Hadtih) being absolutely sure arguments, while Ijmaa or unanimous agreement of the Muslim scholars and Qiyas or deduction are Ijtihad or reasoning. It is agreed that there

is no ijtihad where there is a text (in the Quran or Sunna). Ijmaa and qiyas are admittedly based on the Quran and the Hadith , the latter itself being only an explanation of the Holy Quran, therefore the Holy Quran is actually the real and sole source from which all the teachings and practices of Islam are drawn.

The Arabic word Quran is derived from the root word qara'a which means collected things together, it also signifies he read or recited because in reading or reciting, letters and words are joined together in a certain order. The Quran is the Holy Book that joins together the essences of Divine Books and religions. It also means a book that is or should be read, containing a prophetical reference to its being "the most widely read book" (7) Certainly it is the most often memorized and possibly it exerts the most influence on those who read it.

6.3.1 The Quran is composed of one hundred and fourteen chapters, called Surahs. Some surahs are long, others are short, but each consists of a number of verses. With the exception of the first Surrah (Al-Fatiha) the opening of the Book, the Surahs are arranged in almost exact order of decreasing length. Thus the second Surah called Al-Baqara has 286 verses, the third has 200, down the surah One Hundred and Fourteen which has only six.

The Holy Quran speaks of itself under various other names. It is called al-Kitab (2:2) meaning the Book which is complete in itself; al-Furqan (25:1) or the Distinguisher between right and wrong and between truth and falsehood; al-Dhikra (15:9) or the Reminder or a source of eminence and glory to man; al-Tanzil (26:192) or the Revelation from on High, Ahsan-al-Hadith (39:23) or the

best saying, al-Huda (72:13) or the Guidance; al-Haqq (17:81) or the Truth and many other names.

Muhammad (A.p.p.h) had great respect and admiration for the Quran which he called Allah's "standing miracle" worked through him. Every letter of the Quran was directly dictated by the Supreme Being over twenty-three years through the voice of Gabriel. No orthodox Muslim doubts the divine origin of the words themselves. Emblazoned on Muhammad's mind, they were recorded by his followers on bones, barks, leaves and scraps of parchment with Allah preserving their literal accuracy throughout.

The Quran is the authentic word of Allah; no letter, word or phrase has been added, omitted or altered since its inception to the present day. The Bibles of the Jews and Christians too were originally authentic revelations from Allah, which fact entitles those who hold them sacred to be classed with Muslims as "people of the Book". Nevertheless the Old and New Testament share two defects from which the Quran is free. The two scriptures are incomplete and have been exposed to corruption, through omissions and alterations. Exemption from these two limitations makes the Quran the final, comprehensive and infallible revelation of the Supreme Being.

The Holy Quran was exposed to the severest criticism possible by Western scholars. The problem with those scholars is that they do not understand or appreciate the language of the Quran, Arabic. The miracle of the Quran is to be found in its language which has far reaching influence on the ears and hearts of the Arabs. The Western scholars read the Quran in translation. To be translated it

has to be interpreted, interpretations, being limited human efforts, are fallible and varied, more important they deprive the Quran of its magic and lustre; this magic which works profoundly and beyond human logic on the souls and minds of the Muslims represents a basic source of the miracle of the Quran. This magic is lost to the Western Scholar even if the translation proves most faithful to the text. That may be the reason why many Muslims insist that the Quran cannot be translated. Muslims have turned their primary effort to teaching the people of other tongues the language in which Allah spoke for all time with incomparable force and directness. The Miracle of the language of the Quran is manifest in the fact, that, by common consent, the Quran is the only religious book that its followers, Muslim Arabs and non-Arabs can memorize it from A to Z without faltering. Many Muslim devotees memorize the whole Quran. Huston Smith succinctly maintains that "the Koran is perhaps the most read in the world. Certainly it is the most often memorized and possibly it exerts the most influence on those who read it" (8)

"No people in the world" writes Philip Hittie, are so moved by the word, spoken or written, as the Arabs. Hardly any language seems capable of exercising over the minds of its users such irresistible influence as Arabic. (9)

If the language of the Quran stands as a barrier that makes outsiders incapable of fully appreciating it, its ideas and concepts are still there to be considered. Ideas can be translated.

6.4 Monotheism. Two thirds of the Quran focus the divine in a single God, a unified Personal Will who

overshadows the entire universe with His power and grace. The Quran stresses that Allah who is Lord of the worlds is also

"The Holy, the Peaceful, the Faithful, the Guardian over His servants, the Shelterer of the orphan, the Guide of the erring, the Deliverer from every affliction, the Friend of the bereaved, the Consoler of the afflicted; in His hand is good, and He is the generous Lord, the Gracious, the Hearer, the Near-at-Hand, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the very-forgiving, whose love for man is more tender than that of the mother-bird for her young" [(10)]

Judaism started as a monotheistic religion as the Quran professes, but the Jews departed tragically from this truth. They reverted to the worship of household gods and golden calves; they approached idolalry in their worship of law. Christians, for their part, have, in Islam's eyes, compromised their monothism by deifying Christ. Islam honours Jesus as a true prophet of Allah. It even accepts the Christian doctrine of his virgin birth. But Islam rejects the doctrine of Incarnation and Trinity being deviations from the truth. In the words of the Quran: "They say that Allah, the Lord of mercy hath gotten to Himself a son. Now have ye uttered a grievous thing. It is not meet for Allah to have children." (iii:78, xix:93) When Jesus claimed to be the son of God, he was thinking of Allah's fatherhood as embracing all mankind. Every human being was to him a child of the Lord. The Christian theologians carried the matter further to maintain that Jesus was the son of god in the literal sense in an attempt to deify him, thus carrying Christian doctrine a long way from the simple purity of the Nazarite.

Allah, in the Quran, can be approached directly without-the intermediary of human beings be they preists or monks or rabbis. The Muslim has ready access to his Lord because between man and Allah stands nothing.

> Is He not closer than the vein of thy neck? Thou needed not raise thy voice, for He knoweth the secret whisper, and what is yet more hidden.....(vi:12)

The sphere of Islam, according to the Quran, is not confined to the next-world, its primary concern is rather with this life, and that man, through a righteous life here on earth, may attain to the consciousness of a higher existence. And so it is that the Holy Quran deals with a vast variety of subjects which affect man's life below. It deals not only with the ways of devotion, with the forms of worship of the Divine Being, with the means which make man attain communion with Allah but also and in richer detail with the problems of the world around us. No book of any religion is so comprehensive in dealing with the smallest details of every day life as does the Quran. Questions of relations between man and man, his social and political life, institutions of marriage, divorce and inheritance, the division of wealth and the relations of labour and capital, the administration of justice, military organization, peace and war, national finance, debts and contracts, rules for the service of humanity and even of dumb creation, laws for the help of the poor, the orphan and the window, and hundreds of other questions. The Quran lays down rules not only for individual progress but also for the advancement of society as a whole, of the nation and even of humanity.

The Quran is unique among books of other religions, it is a book that remains valid till dooms day. There are few letters at the opening of some chapters in addition to some verses which are still inexplicable to the most devout Muslim Scholars. Some of these verses gradually unfold their meaning in the light of the modern scientific discoveries. This process of discovering new meanings in the Quran will continue forever. The Quran is a book for all times and all places.

6.5 Notes

1-Maulana Muhammad Ali, The Religion of Islam (U.A.R. National Publication &Printing House), P.4.

2-Ameer Ali; The Spirit of Islam (London; Christophers, 1923), P.18.

3-Ibid P.32.

4-Ibid .

5-Sir William Muir quoted in Ameer Ali, op.cit.

6-The Religions of Man ,P.208.

7-Encyclopedia Brittanica

8- The Religions of Man p.208.

9-Philip, Hitti: The Arabs: A Short History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949) P.32.

10-Ameer Ali P.150.

Chapter Seven

The Religion of All Prophets

7.1Neither Judaism Nor Christianity was Mentioned in the Bible

7.2 Islam is not Mohammadanism

7.3 Noah

7.4 Abraham

7.5 Jacob

7.6 Lut

7.7 Joseph

7.8 Moses

7.9 The Prophets of Israel

7.9.1 Solomon

7.9.2 Jesus

7.10 The Jinns

7.11 Mohammad

7.12 Notes

7.1 Neither Judaism nor Christianity was Mentioned in the Bible

All the prophets and messengers of Allah from Adam to Muhammad (Allah's prayers and peace be upon them) adopted Islam and promulgated its message from the dawn of history to the present day. The conception of Islam is man's total surrendering of himself and his will to the will of the great Creator; this is the meaning of Islam in Arabic. It also means peace between the Creator and his creatures. Unlike Judaism and Christianity Islam is a name Allah has chosen for his overall religion [1] No mention of Judaism or Christianity is made in any version of the Gospels or the Bible. Moreover, the word Judaism is never referred to by any of the prophets of Israel. Jesus (Allah's peace be upon him) did not claim that he was Christian nor was he sent to spread Christianity. The word Christianity is mentioned but three times in The NewTestament. It was once mentioned by the pagans and the Jews in Antioch, about 45 years after the assension of Jesus " the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch"(Acts 11:26) .The word Christians was mentioned the second time by King Agrippa II in his address to Paul, "And Agrippa said to Paul you are persuading me to become a Christian" (Acts 22 :28).This time as it is clear it was mentioned by an enemy. The third and last time the word Christian was mentioned in a message sent by Peter to his followers to pacify them "If any of you suffers for being Christian, he shouldn't feel ashamed". (Peter 4:16).

7.2 Islam Is Not Mohammadanism

This means that neither Christianity nor Judaism was mentioned in any of their sacred books as a name of a

religion.These names were given to them by their followers and these names are connected with the names of their prophets. For the word Judaism is taken from the name of Juda, the prophet to whom this religion is attributed and the word Christians literally means the Messiah folk. Whereas Islam is not called Muhammadanism as sometimes it is mistakenly called by some Western scholars. The idea is that Islam did not start with Muhammad (Allah's prayers and peace be upon him) but it started as we mentioned before with Adam. All the subsequent prophets were Muslims in the sense that they surrendered their wills in absolute slavery to the will of Allah. The leading prophet in this connection was Ibrahim (Abraham), the father of all prophets (peace be upon him) who set the most wonderful example of the slave's surrender to the will of Allah voluntarily and without the least hesitation. Allah Almighty bestowed Ibrahim with his son Ishmael when he was over seventy –five .It is clear how such a father would adore his son whom he gets at that age after long expectation and yearning. Such father would have more care and fear lest his child should be exposed to any harm. Nonetheless, when Allah ordered Ibrahim to leave his son and wife in a barren desert where there was no water or plant, Ibrahim did not hesitate for a moment and submitted to Allah's will saying: "O our Lord I have made some of my off spring to dwell in a valley without cultivation by thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord! that they may establish regular prayers ;so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits ;so that they may give thanks". [2]

Ishmael (Ismail) grows up and becomes a young man who gratifies his father's heart and who supports him in old age. However, the old man does not enjoy the company

of his child for long before he receives the heavenly order to slaughter his son. Ibrahim does not ask why? or what is the idea behind it ? He surrenders to Allah's will blindly. It is the absolute surrender of the slave to his Creator without raising a finger of complaint or posing for a moment in hesitation. The father conveys the heavenly order to his son; " I see in my dreams that I should slaughter you" (3). The son, being a chip of the old stone and knowing that the prophets' dreams are orders, responds immediately and without flinching; "Do father what you are instructed. Allah willing. I'll be one of the patients" (4) Thus, the son sets another great example of the slave's total surrender to the will of the Lord.

7.3 Noah

As has been pointed out before, all the prophets were Muslims. Noah, the messenger of Allah (Allah's peace be upon him) was a Muslim. The Quran makes this clear. Allah says: "(71) Relate to them the story of Noah. Behold! he said to his people " O my people ,if it be hard on your (mind) that I should stay (with you) and remind (you) of the signs of Allah ,-yet I put my trust in Allah. Get you then an agreement about your plan and among your partners, so your plan be not to you dark and dubious. Then pass your sentence on me, and give me no respite. (72) But if you turn back, (consider) no reward have I asked of you: my reward is only due from Allah, and I have been commanded to be of those who submit to Allah's will (in Islam)." (5)

7.4 Abraham

Ibrahim (Allah's peace be upon him) was also a Muslim. Allah Almighty says:"(127) And remember Abraham and Ismail raised the foundations of the House (with their prayer) saying: "Our Lord! accept (This service)from us: for Thou art the All- hearing ,the All –knowing .(128) Our Lord! make of us Muslims ,bowing to thy (will); and of our progeny a people of Muslims , bowing to thy (will); and show us our places for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn into us (in mercy); for Thou art oft-relenting, most merciful.(129) Our Lord! send amongst them a messenger of their own who shall rehearse thy signs to them and instruct them inscripture and wisdom, and purify them : for Thou art the exalted in might, the wise. (130) And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly. Him we chose and rendered pure in this world: and he will be in the hereafter in the ranks of the righteous. (131) Behold! his Lord said to him: submit (thy will to me): He said: I submit (my will) to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe .(132) And Abraham enjoined upon his sons, and so did Jacob; Oh my sons ! Allah hath chosen the faith for you; then die not except in the state of submission (to Allah)." [(6)]

7.5 Jacob

Jacob was also a Muslim. Allah Almighty says "(133) Were ye witnesses when death appeared before Jacob; Behold! he said to his sons: what will ye worship after me ? they said: we shall worship thy God and the God of thy fathers, of Abraham, Ismail and Isaac , the one (true) God ; to Him do we submit" [(7)].

7.6 Lut

Lut (Allah's peace be upin him) was a Muslim Prophet. Allah, Almighty says "Then Lut believed him, and he (Ibrahim) said: Surely I am migrating to my Lord, Surely He, only He, is the Ever-Mighty, The Ever-wise.[7] Lut believed in the God of Ibrahim, but his wife, like that of Noah disbelieved. The Quran says: Allah has struck a similitude for the ones who have disbelieved: The wife of Noah and the wife of Lut. They were under two righteous bondmen of Our bondmen, yet they betrayed them. So they did not avail them anything whatsoever before Allah and it was said to (the two wives) "Enter you two the Fire with the ones who enter" [8]

7.7 Joseph

Joseph (Allah's peace be upon him) came with Islam. Allah Almighty says "(101) (Joseph says) O my Lord! Thou hast indeed bestowed on me some power, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams,-O Thou Creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my protector in this world and in the hereafter. Take thou my soul (at death) as one submitting to thy will (As a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous" [9]

7.8 Moses

Moses (Allah's peace be upon him) was also a Muslim. Allah Almighty says:"(84) Moses said: O my people! If ye do (really) believe in Allah, then in Him put your trust if ye submit (your will to His)" [10]

It is also the religion of Mose's people from Israel. Allah Almighty says: "(90) We took the children of Israel across the sea: Pharaoh and his hosts followed them in insolence

and spite. At length, when overwhelmed with the flood, he said: I believe that there is no god except Him whom the children of Israel believe in: I am of those who submit (to Allah in Islam)" [11]

It is also the religion of the magicians who believed in Moses' God. Allah says:"(120). But the sorcerers fell down prostrate in adoration of (121) the Lord of Moses and Aaron. (122) saying : we believe in the Lord of the worlds . (123) Said Pharaoh: believe ye in Him before I give you permission? Surely this is a trick which ye have planned in the city to drive out its people: But soon shall ye know (the consequences). (124) Be sure I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and I will crucify you all. (125) They said: for us, we are but sent back unto our Lord. (126) but thou dost wreak thy vengeance on us simply because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they reached us! Our Lord! pour out on us patience and constancy, and take our souls unto Thee as Muslims (who bow to Thy will)" [12]

7.9 The Prophets of Israel

And it is the religion of the prophets of Israel. Allah Almighty says: "(44) It was We who revealed the Torah (to Moses): therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged, the Jews, by prophets who bowed (as in Islam) to Allah's will, by the Rabbis and the Doctors of law: for to them was entrusted, the protection of Allah's book, and they were witnesses thereto: therefore fear not men, but fear Me, and sell not my signs for miserable price. If any do fail to judge by what Allah hath revealed, they are unbelievers." [13]

7.9.1 Solomon

Islam is also the religion of Solmon (Allah's peace be upon him). Allah Almighty says: "(42) So when she (Balqais) arrived, she was asked: Is this thy throne? she said: It seems the same. And knowledge was bestowed on us in advance of this, and we have submitted to Allah (in Islam)." (14) And says: " (44) She was asked to enter the lofty palace: but when she saw it, she thought it was a lake of water, and she pulled up (her skirts) uncovering her legs . He said: this is but a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass .She said: O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul: I do (now) submit (in Islam), with Solomon, to the Lord of the worlds." (15)

7.9.2 Jesus

Islam also is the religion of Jesus (Allah's peace be upon him) and of his disciples. Allah Almighty says: "(52) When Jesus found unbelief on their part, he said: who will be my helpers to (the work of) Allah?, said the disciples: We are Allah's helpers. We believe in Allah, And do thou bear witness that we are Muslims." (16) And He says "(111) And behold! I inspired the disciples to have faith in Me and Mine messenger; they said: we have faith, and do Thou bear witness that we bow to Allah as Muslims." (17)

7.10 The Jinns

It is also the religion of the well-guided Jinns. Allah Almighty says "(14) Amongst us are some (Jinns) that submit their wills (to Allah), and some that swerve from justice. Now those who submit their wills, they have sought

out (the path) of right conduct. (15) But those who swerve, they are (but) fuel for hell- fire." [18]

It is also the religion of the authentic followers of Allah. Revealed books before Muhammad (Allah's prayers and peace be upon him) witness to this .Allah Almighty says "(52) Those to whom we sent the book before this, they do believe in this (revelation); (53) and when it is recited to them, they say: we believe therein, for it is the truth from our Lord : Indeed we have been Muslims (bowing to Allah's will) from before this" [19]

7.11 Mohammad

Finally, it is the religion of Muhammad, the last and the seal of prophets (Allah's prayers and peace be upon them all). Allah Almighty says "(19) The religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His will): nor did the people of the book dissent therefrom except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them. But if any deny signs of Allah, Allah is swift in calling to account. (20) So if they dispute with thee , say I have submitted my whole self to Allah and so have those who follow me. And say to the people of the book and to those who are unlearned: Do ye (also) submit yourselves? If they do, they are in right guidance; but if they turn back, thy duty is to convey the message; and in Allah's sight are called His servants." [20] **And Allah says"(66) say: I have been forbidden to invoke those whom ye invoke besides Allah-seeing that the clear signs have come to me from my Lord; and I have been commanded to submit (in Islam) to the Lord of the worlds."** [21] **And He says "(3) ... This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion ..."** [22]

Moreover, the Quran states clearly that Islam is the religion of the inhabitants of the heavens and earth. Allah says "(83) Do they seek for other than the religion of Allah? -While all creatures in heavens and earth have, willingly or unwillingly bowed to His will (accepted Islam). And to Him shall they all be brought back" (23)

To this religion alone the prophet Muhammad (Allah's prayers and peace be upon him) directed his message and his messengers asking the kings and the rulers of the nations to follow it proclaiming their adoption of Islam and that of the religion of the one and only God. Allah Almighty says "(64) Say: O people of the book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah: that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah." (24)

Having expounded the simple concept of Islam, and that all the prophets are in essence Muslims, now we proceed to explain the five pillars of Islam and how they are performed.

7.12 Notes

(1) Consider the chapter entitled "Al –Maida"5 (The Table), verse 3:

"This day, I have completed your religion for you and perfected my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion".

(١) سورة المائدة آية ٣

"اليَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الإِسْلامَ دِيناً "

2-Chapter "Abraham"14, verse 37

3-Chapter "As-Safat"37, verse 102

4-Chapter "Yunus", verses 71-72

5-Chapter "Al –Baqarah", verse 127-132

6-Chapter "Al-Baqarah", verse 133

7-Chapter "Al-Ankabut" 29, verse 26

8-Al-Tahrim "Prohibition" 66, verse 10

9-Chapter "Yusuf"12, verse 101

10- Chapter "Yunus" 10, verse 84

11-Chapter "Yunus" 10 verse 90

12-Chapter "Al –Araf"7,verses 120-126

13- Chapter "Al-Maida"5(The Table) verse 44

14-Chapter "An –Naml"27, verse 42

15-Chapter "An – Naml "27, verse 44

16-Chapter "Al – Imran"3 verse 52

17-Chapter "Al –Imran"3,verse111

18-Chapter "Al –Jinn"72, verses14-15

19-Chapter "Al- Qasas"27verses 52-53

20-Chapter "Al-Imran"3, verses19-20

21-Chapter "Gafir"40,verse 66

22-Chapter "Al –Maida"5(The Table), verse3

23-Chapter "Al –Imran"3,verse83

24-Chapter "AL –Imran"3,verse 64

Chapter Eight

Tawheed

8.1 Professing the Oneness of Allah

Sincerely believing in and professing faith in the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (A.p.p.h.)(declaring that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His prophet and last messenger) is the first and basic of the five pillars of Islam-the others being Salat (prayers) Zakat (paying the compulsory alms dues), Siyam (fasting) and Hajj (pilgrimage) by those who can afford it. The declaration of the Oneness of Allah is called "Tawheed" in Arabic which means unification. Besides being a major issue in Islam, "Tawheed" is a logical issue.

Regardless of what religions have stressed from the days of Adam to the present day, man's natural inclination would lead him unmistakeably to realize that there is only one Creator for this harmonious universe .The stamp of the One Lord is there in everything around us, be they galaxies and stars, plants and woods, deserts and vallies, occeans and rivers or animals and human beings. The absolute accuracy and perfection with which this universe moves from infinite times reveals the work of a Mastermind that is peerless, whose powers and characteristics are beyond man's power of thinking or imagination, that becomes the Lord .The finite mind of man cannot circumscribe the infinite Allah whose Being is dissimilar to all man's stored memories of shapes, figures and conceptions from the dawn of history to the present day.

It is unimaginable to think of more than one creator for this harmonious universe. Logically speaking, if there are two gods, they would be either united and thus become one in actuality or they may conflict and that would result in

the collapse of the whole universe.[1] The Oneness of the Creator is the only logical conclusion to which any person can reach unless he deviates from the right path, the path of reason. This flawless plan, this harmonious design, this wonderful life carries but the stamp of one creator. Reason and reason only affirms that there is One Supreme Lord of the universe; He is omnipotent, Omnipresent and the sustainer of the world and of all created beings

In Surat Al-a'raaf, verses 172-173. Allah makes it clear that when He created Adam, he caused all Adam's descendants to come into existance before Him and He took a pledge from them saying: "Am I not your Lord"? to which they all replied ,"yes ,we testify to it".[2] Allah then explains why He had all of mankind bear witness that He is their only creator and their only true God, worthy of worship. He says; "when thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam from their lions – Their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves (saying):"Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?"
They said:"yea!
we do testify! (this), lest
Ye should say on the day
of judgement: "of this we
were never mindful."

Thus the descendants cannot claim that they disbelieve because they followed the example of their forefathers. Belief in the Oneness of Allah is innate and part of human nature. Allah explains "It was also in case you should say; Certainly, it was our ancestors who made partners (with Allah)and we are only their descendants; will you then destroy us for what those liars did?"[3]

Disbelieving in the Oneness of Allah i:e Al-shirk (taking partners with Allah) is the greatest sin as it goes against logic and man's natural inclination and reveals man's arrogance and pride "Verily, Allah will not forgive the joining of partners with Him but He may forgive (sins)less than that for whomsoever He wishes"[4]. Idolatory is the greatest sin that man can commit because it contradicts the very purpose of his creation.
Man was created to worship Allah alone; Allah has explicitly stated in the Quran "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may worship Me [5]

Every child is born with a natural belief in Allah and an in-born inclination to worship Him alone. This in-born belief and inclination is called in Arabic "Fitrah". It is reported that prophet Muhammad (A.p.p.h) said that; "Each child is born in a state of "Fitrah". Then his parents make him a Jew, Christian or Zoraostrian". If the child is left alone, he would, by his natural inclination and pure perception find his way to Allah and realize that there is only one creator for this harmonious universe. Nevertheless, all children are affected by their environment, be that effect a negative or a positive one.

All the prophets who were sent by Allah to their peoples invited them to worship the One Almighty God. In the Quran Allah says: "We sent Noah to his people. He said: "O my people! worship Allah ! ye have no other god but Him ! I fear for you the punishment of a dreadful day![6] Hud (peace be upon him)addressed his people of A'd saying " O my people! worship Allah ! Ye have no other god but Him. Will ye not fear (Allah). [7] Saleh (peace be upon him) addressed the people of Thamud saying: "O

my people! worship Allah : Ye have no other god but Him".[8] Sh'aib (peace be upon him) said to the people of Madyan "O my people! worship Allah, ye have no other god but Him. Allah Almighty says: "For we assuredly sent amongest every people a messenger (with the command) "worship Allah, and avoid false gods".[9] Allah Almighty also stresses the same idea saying : "Not a messenger did we send before thee without this inspiration sent by Us to him : that there is no god but I; therefore worship Me".[10] Prophet Muhammad (A.p.p.h) highlighted the same idea when he said "I have been commanded to fight people until they proclaim that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger".[11]

8.2 Jews and the Conception of Tawheed

The early Israelites were aware of the Oneness of Allah, that was the reason why Allah preferred them at that time to all their surrounding nations, being polytheists whereas the Jews were monotheists. Yet, the Israelites who followed Moses after their exodus from Egypt moulded a golden calf and worshipped it.

When Moses returned after receiving The Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, he was shocked by the deviation of his people and in his wrath destroyed their golden idol and left them in the wilderness. Later on, the Jews claimed that Uzair was the son of God (Allah forbids). Allah Almighty explains that explicitly in the Quran "the Jews call Uzair a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouthes; (In this they but imitate what the

unbelievers of the old used to say. Allah's curse be on them : How they are deluded away from the truth".[12]

8.3 Christians and the Conception of Tawheed

The early Christians, also, believed in the Oneness of Allah; Jesus Christ never claimed that he was a Lord or the son of God as was pointed out in the chapter on "Christianity". Jesus himself said: "None of those who call me Lord will enter the Kingdom of God, but only the one who does the will of my father will be in Heaven" (Mathew, 7:21). It is only in the third century A.D. that the idea of Trinity was introduced into Christianity. The Trinity is not Biblical. The word Trinity is not in the Bible nor even in Biblical dictionaries nor was it taught by Jesus or ever mentioned by him. There is no proof or basis in the Bible whatsoever for the acceptance of Trinity. The origin of the conception can be found in the pagan religion of the Romans and in some versions of Buddhism and Hinduism. See the chapters on Hinduism and Buddhism.

8.4 Aspects of Tawheed

Tawheed is considered under three distinctive headings:1-Maintaining the unity of Lordship (Tawheed – Ar-Roboo beyah).2-maintaining the unity of worship (Tawheed Al-Ebada).3-maintaining the unity of Allah's Names and Attributes (Tawheed Al-Asmaa wals-Sefat).

The division of Tawheed into three components is done for pure academic reasons. These were not referred to by the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) nor by any of his companions or

their followers. Moreover their concepts overlap at many instances.

8.4.1 Maintaining the unity of Lordship {Tawheed Ar-Roboobiyah}

"Rabb" in Arabic means Lord. Maintaining the unity of Lordship means that Allah alone caused everything to be, to exist from nothing ,without any external assistance .He sustains and maintains all creations without any need for them and without expecting any reward from them.[13] Nothing happens in this universe without His permission. Not a bird's feather is washed away without Allah's permission .In recognition of this reality prophet Mohamed (A.p.p.h.) used to repeat. "There is no movement nor power except by Allah's power".[14]

The basic concept of maintaining the unity of Lordship can be found in many Quranic verses; for example, Allah says: "Allah created all things and He is the agent on which all things depend". [15]. He, also, says: "And Allah created you all and whatever you do."[16]

Maintaining the unity of Lordship involves believing that whatever happens to man from the moment of his birth until he dies is predestined, i:e. is controlled by the will of Allah be that good or evil. Allah Almighty says: "And no calamity strikes except by Allah's determination".[17] It is reported that the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said commenting on this point "Be aware that if the whole of mankind gathered together to help you, they would only do what Allah had already ordained. Likewise, if the whole of mankind gathered together to harm you, they would only do what Allah had already written for

you".[18] The believers should accept the good happenings with thanks and gratitude and the bad happenings with patience and tolerance as both the good and the bad are tests from Allah as mentioned in the holy verse "Surely we will test you with fear, hunger, loss of wealth and life and the fruits of your work so give glad tidings to those who are patient".[19]

Moreover, Allah alerts us that we should not consider things by their face value. What may seem good to our limited mental faculties may prove harmful in due time and vice versa. "Perhaps you may dislike something which is good for you, or like something which is bad for you, but Allah knows (what is best for you) and you do not".[20] As long as man believes that whatever happens to him, be that good or harmful, is caused by Allah man then should not believe anything as bringer of good luck or as a means of evading evil or bad luck; as such belief would be "shirk", i:e taking partners with Allah. Belief in luck numbers, zodiacal signs, broken mirrors, black cats, amulets (even if they contain verses from the Quran) are manifestations of "shirk" which is a grave sin, as it involves the belief that there is another force beside Allah which controls man's life .It is reported by Ibn Uqbah-one of the companions of the Prophet (A.p.p.h.), that he said "Whoever wears an amulet has committed shirk".

Thus Tawheed Ar –Roboobiyah involves not only believing in and professing the Oneness of Allah, but also accepting pre-destination, i:e that all that happens to man be that good or harmful are from Allah. Besides it involves the rejection of all other forces believed to influence man's destiny. This frees man from fear of his fellow man or of the unknown.

8.4.2 Maintaining the Unity of Worship {Tawheed Al-Ebaada}

Though man may believe in the unity of Lordship, he may in ignorance worship idols along with Allah. Allah says to his Prophet Mohammad (A.p.p.h.) that if he asked the idol worshippers of Mecca "who is it that gives you all sustenance from the sky and earth, governs sight and hearing, brings forth life from dead (matter) and death from the living and plans the affairs of man? they will all say :"Allah"(21) This indicates that originally they worshipped Allah but associated with Him their idols. As a matter of fact, they used to practise various forms of worship to Allah such as Hajj, paying charity, animal sacrifice, circumambulating Kaa'ba, "Sai" between Safaa and Marwa and even praying to Allah in times of dire need. They even used to claim that they are followers of the religion of Abraham (Ibrahim in Arabic).

Some pagans of Mecca even believed in resurrection and the Day of Judgement; others in Predestination (Qadar). Ample evidence of their belief can be found in their pre-Islamic poetry. For example the poet Zuhair says:

It is either delayed, placed in a book and saved
For the Day of Judgement or hastened and avenged.

Antarah, another pre-Islamic poet, says:

O'Ebil to where will you run from death if my Lord in the sky has destined it?

The disbelievers of Mecca were the descendants of the early inhabitants of Mecca who believed in the religion of Abraham. That may explain why the late Meccans retained many forms of worship which started with Abraham such as Hajj and "Sai", Abraham was a true Muslim.The Holy Quran says:

"Abraham was not a Jew nor was he a Christian but (he) was
a true Muslim and not among those who joined partners with Allah".[22]

The followers of Abraham were true Muslims but their descendants gradually deviated from the right path, the path of Tawheed and joined partners in their worship of Allah. How did this happen?

Once Prophet Mohammad (A.p.p.h.) asked his cousin Alee Ibn Abee Taleb to trace the origin of the idols (such as Hobal and Allat) which the Arabs worshipped in pre-Islamic times and whose statues were placed round Al-kaaba . After an extensive and intensive study in old books Alee came with the conclusion that these names (Hobal, Allat, Al-Ozza) were for pious people in their days. When they died, people visited their tombs seeking their blessings. People believed that they were closer to Allah, so they sought their intercession when they wanted Allah's help or when they wanted to avoid evil. Gradually, those pious dead people gained the status of saints to whom sacrifices were offered and rituals performed. As time passed the status of those saints was magnified until it became similar to that of Allah. Those saints who were regarded as a means that brings man closer to Allah, became an end in themselves. They became demi-gods;

each Arab tribe transformed its saint into a god, made a statue for him and placed it beside Al –Kaaba. When the Prophet heard this he ordered all the tombs to be surfaced to the ground undistinguished. However, some Meccans were aware of the origin of these idols. According to the Quran, when the wise men of Mecca were asked about directing their prayers to idols that cannot protect themselves, leave alone protecting or harming their worshippers, they answered: "We only worship them so that they may bring us closer to Allah". [(23)]

The issue of intermediaries is rejected in Islam as it involves implicit "shirk" which would become explicit idolatory in due time as the history of the Arabs in Mecca indicates and so does the history of the Jews and the Christians.

Prophet Mohammed (A.p.p.h.) alerts us that we should direct our prayers and supplications to Allah directly without seeking the intercession of anybody be he living or dead. It is reported that he said: "If you ask in prayer, ask only Allah, and if you seek help, seek it only from Allah".[(24)] The rejection of any intercession between man and his Creator is further emphasized by many Quranic verses, such as "when My slaves ask you O'Mohammed about Me (tell them), verily, I am close (to them), I listen to the prayer of every one who calls on Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me in order that they may be guided aright".[(25)] The confirmation of Tawheed al-Ebaada conversely necessitates the denial of all forms of intercession or association of partners with Allah. If someone prays to the dead, so –called saints (sheikhs) seeking their influence on the lives of the living or the souls of those who have passed away, he has associated a

partner with Allah, because worship is being shared between Allah and His creation.

Christians influenced by the teachings of Paul "the Messenger" directed their prayers to Jesus and his mother along with Allah. The Catholics have their saints for every occasion to whom they direct their prayers in the belief that these saints can directly influence the affairs of this world. They also use the priests as intercessors between themselves and Allah in the mistaken belief that the priests are closer to Allah due to celibacy and piety. In one occasion the Prophet's companion Adee Ibn Hatim who was a convert from Christianity heard the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) recite the Quranic verse: "They have taken their rabbis and monks besides Allah".[26] So he said "surely ,we didn't worship them". The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) turned to him and said: "Did they not make forbidden (Haraam) what Allah had made allowable (Halaal) and you all made it "Haraam"?, and did they not make "Halaal" what Allah made "Haraam" and you all made it "Halaal"? "He replied: "we certainly did". The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) then said "That was how you worshipped them"

8.4.3 Maintaining the Unity of Allah's Names and Attributes (Tawheed Al Asmaa Was-Sifat)

This category of Tawheed has four features:

A- Allah must be referred to according to How He and His Prophet have described Him .For example, some people call themselevs Abd Al mawgood, "the slave of the created". The name "Mawgood" is not one of the attributes of Allah; moreover it contradicts the

conception of Lordship as the created cannot be a creator.

B-The second feature of Tawheed Al-Asmaa –Was-Sifat involves abstaining from referring to Allah by giving Him the attributes of His creation. For example, it is claimed in the Bible and Torah that Allah spent the first six days creating the universe then slept on the seventh .For this reason, Jews and Christians take either Saturday or Sunday as a day of rest in which work is considered a sin. Attributing man's deficiency to Allah and man's tendency to sleep after hard work is unacceptable with regard to the Islamic conception of Lordship where Allah is peerless without any similitude.

C-The third feature of Tawheed Al-Asmaa Was-Sifat is to be found in not giving the names of Allah in their definite form to His slaves unless they are preceded by the word "Abd" meaning "Slave of". The only names of Allah which can be given to individuals are "Ra'oof"(most kind) and "Raheem" (most merciful), as they were used by Allah to describe His Prophet Muhammad (A.p.p.h.). Allah says: "A messenger has come to you from among yourselves to whom anything which burdens you is grievious. He is full of concern for you and is full of kindness (Ra'oof) and full of mercy (Raheem). (Chapter "Al-Tawbah" 9,verse 128)[27]

D –The fourth feature of Tawheed Al-Asmaa Was –Sifat involves that people should not call themselves slaves of the Prophet or the messenger or Al –Husayn or any other saint . Such names as Abd-Al-Nabee, Abd Al-Rasul ,Abd Al-Husayn, etc. involve "shirk"! Moreover, one should not call his servant as " Abdee "which means "my slave" or "Amatee" which means my slave- girl ".

8.5 Notes

(1) Surat Al-Anbia verse 22
"If there were therein gods beside Allah, then verily both the heavens and earth had been disordered".

(١)سوره الأنبياء آية ٢٢

"لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا "

2-Surat AlAraf (The Battlements), verse 172:

"And as your Lord took from the seeds of Adam, from their backs their offspring, and made them bear witness concerning themselves, "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes indeed, we bear witness"; (so) that you should not say on the Day of the Resurrection, "Surely we were heedless of this";

(٢)سورة الأعراف آية :١٧٢

"وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِن بَنِي آدَمَ مِن ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَن تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ "

3-Surat Al-Araf, verse 173:

"Or that you should not say, "Surely it is only our fathers (who) associated aforetime, and we were (their) offspring even after them. Would you then cause us to perish for what the wrong-doers performed?"

(٣) سورة الأعراف :آية ١٧٣

"أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ "

4- Surat An-Nisa(Women), verse 116:
"Surely Allah does not forgive that (anything be) with Him associated; and (anything) whatsoever, apart from that, He forgives to whomsoever He decides."

(٤)سورة النساء آية ١١٦

"إِنَّ اللَّه لاَ يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ "

5- Surat Ath-Thariyat (The Winnowers), verse 56:

"And in no way did I create the Jinn and humankind except to worship Me."

(٥)سورة الذاريات آية ٥٦

"وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الجِنَّ وَالإِنسَ إِلاَّ لِيَعْبُدُونِ "

6- Surat Hud, verses 25-26.

"And indeed We already sent Nuh to his people, "Surely I am for you an evident warner. That you worship none except Allah. Surely I fear for you the torment of a painful Day.

(٦)سورة هود آية ٢٥ –٢٦

" وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحاً إِلَى قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ (٢٥) أَن لاَّ تَعْبُدُوا إِلاَّ اللَّهَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ (٢٦) "

7-Surat Al-Araf, verse 65:

"And to Ad (We sent) their brother Hud; he said "O my people! Worship Allah! In no way do you have any god other than He. Will you then not be pious?"

(٧)سورة الأعراف آية ٦٥

"وَإِلَى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُوداً قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلاَ تَتَّقُونَ "

8-Surat Al-Araf, verse 85:

"Worship Allah! In no way do you have any god other than He."

(٨)سورة الأعراف آية ٨٥

"اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ "

9- Surat An-Nahl (The Bee), verse 36:

"And indeed We have already sent forth in every nation a Messenger (saying) "Worship Allah and avoid the Taghut?"

(٩)سورة النحل آية ٣٦

"وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ "

10- Surat Al-Anbiya (The Prophets), verse 25:

"And in no way did We send (any) Messenger even before you except that We revealed to him (saying) "There is no god except I ;so, worship Me."

(١٠)سورة الأنبياء آية ٢٥

"وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ "

(11) Hadith

Narrated by Ibn Abass, and quoted in At Aqidah Al- Tahaweya P.77)

(١١) حديث شريف

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: " أمرْتُ أن أقاتل الناس حتى يشهدوا أن لا إلـــه إلا الله وأن محمداً رسول الله "(متفق عليه من حديث ابن عباس وغـيره وورد في كتـاب "العقيـدة الطحاوية" ص ٧٧)

12-Surat At-Tawbah (repentance), verse 30:

"And the Jews said Uzair is the son of Allah" "And the Nasara have said "The Messiah is the son of Allah;" That is their saying with their mouth, conforming with the saying of the disbelievers aforetime. May Allah damn them! Howsoever are they diverged (into) falsehood?"

(١٢)سورة التوبة آية ٣٠

" وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِـكَ قَوْلُـهُم بِأَفْوَاهِـهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَبْلُ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ "

13-Surat Ibrahim verses 8:14
Allah Almighty says " If you show ingratitude, Ye and earth together, yet is Allah free of all wants, worthy of all praise"(Ibr

(١٣) سورة إبراهيم آية ٨

"إِن تَكْفُرُوا أَنتُمْ وَمَن فِي الأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ "

14-"There is no movement or power except Allah's"

(١٤) لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله

15-Surat Az-Zumar (The Hodes), verse 62:
"Allah is the Creator of everything; and He is the Ever-Trustee over everything."

(١٥)سورة الزمر آية ٦٢

"اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ "

16-Surat As-Saffat (The Rangers), verse 96:
"And Allah created you and whatever you do?"

(١٦) سورة الصافات آية ٩٦

" وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ "

17-Surat At-Taghabun (Mutual Fraud), verse 11:
"In no way is there any affliction that afflicts, except it be by the permission of Allah."

(١٧) سورة التغابن آية ١١

"مَا أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ "

18-Reported by Ibn Abbas and collected by Al. Turmidhi {Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denny's Johnson. Daries. An-Nawawis Forty Hadith Trans. (Danascus: the Holy Koran publishing House, 1976) No 19 p.64.

(١٨) حديث شريف

"اعلم أن الأمة لو اجتمعت على أن ينفعوك بشيء لن ينفعوك بشيء إلا قد كتبه الله لـــك واعلم أن الأمة لو اجتمعـــت على أن يضروك بشيء لن يضروك بشـــيء إلا قـــد كتبـــه الله عليك"

19-Surat Al-Baqarah (The Cow), verse 155:

"And indeed We will definitely try you with something of fear and hunger, and diminution of riches, and selves, and products; and give glad tidings to the patient (ones)."

(١٩) سورة البقرة آية ١٥٥

"وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الأَمْوَالِ وَالأنفُسِ وَالثَّمَـــرَاتِ وَبَشِّـــرِ الصَّابِرِينَ "

2o-Surat Al-Baqarah (The Cow), verse 216:

"..and it may be that you hate a thing, (while) it is most charitable to you; and it may be that you love a thing (while)it is evil for you; and Allah knows and you do not know."

(٢٠)سورة البقرة آية ٢١٦

" وَعَسَى أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئاً وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَن تُحِبُّوا شَيْئاً وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَاللَّـــهُ يَعْلَـــمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ "

21-Surat Yunus (Jonah), verse 31:

"Say, "Who provides you from the heaven and the earth, or even who possesses hearing and beholdings and who brings out the living from the dead, and brings out the dead from the living, and who conducts the command?" They will then soon say, "Allah".

(٢١)سورة يونس آية ٣١

" قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالأَرْضِ أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالأَبْصَارَ وَمَن يُخْرِجُ الحَيَّ مِنَ المَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ المَيِّتَ مِنَ الحَيِّ وَمَن يُدَبِّرُ الأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ "

22-Surat Al-Imran (The Household of Imran), verse 67

"Ibrahim was in no way a Jew, neither a Nazarene; but he was an unswervingly (upright) Muslim; and he was in no way one of the associators."

(٢٢) سورة آل عمران آية ٦٧

"مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِياً وَلاَ نَصْرَانِياً وَلَكِن كَانَ حَنِيفاً مُّسْلِماً وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ "

23-Surat Az-Zumar (The Hordes), verse, 3:

"We in no way worship them excepting that they may bring us near in proximity to Allah."

(٢٣)سورة الزمر آية ٣

" مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلاَّ لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى "

24-Hadith

Reported by Ibn Abbas and collected by Al-Tirmidhee – see An – Nawawis <u>Forty Hadith</u>

(٢٤) حديث ابن عباس . معناه

" إذا سألت فاسأل الله وإذا استعنت فاستعن بالله "

25-Surat Al-Baqarah (The Cow), verse, 186:

"And when My bondmen ask you concerning Me-then, surely I am near, I answer the invocation of the invoker when he invokes Me; so let them respond to Me, and let them believe in Me, so that possibly they would respond right-mindedly."

(٢٥)سورة البقرة آية ١٨٦

"وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُم يَرْشُدُونَ "

26-Surat At-Tawbah (Repentance), verse, 31:
"They have taken to themselves as lords, apart from Allah, their doctors and their monks..."

(٢٦) سورة التوبة آية ٣١
" اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَاباً مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ "

(٢٧) سورة التوبة آية ١٢٨
" لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ "

Chapter Nine

Prayer (Salat)

Prayer (Salat)

Prayer (Salat) is one of the five pillars of Islam, it comes second in importance after declaring belief in the Oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Mohammad (A.p.p.h.). The Arabic word "Salat" is derived from the root word "Salla" which means supplicated and remembered (da,aa and dhakara).However, in Islam the term "Salat" is used to refer to a form of worship to be performed with specific physical, ritual meaningful movements while reciting some verses of the Holy Quran(1). Before performing Salat the Muslim has to purify his body, have ablution and wear clean clothes.

9.1 The importance of prayer: As has been pointed out before prayer occupies a position of importance next to belief in the Oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad (A.p.p.h.) As a matter of fact, it is a practical application of that belief. It is related by Jabir bin Abdullah that the prophet said "Between a Muslim and apostasy there is only the giving up of prayer Salat" The prophet has also srongly recommended the regular performance of prayers. Many of the traditions specifically deal with this, and the final words he uttered during his last hour on earth were "keep prayers! keep prayers! You will keep your solidarity as long as you all pray. Deliberate negligence of prayers constitute the difference between belief and unbelief. A child is asked to pray at the age of seven, and is punished for not performing prayer at the age of ten: Tell your children to pray when they are seven and punish them for not performing prayer at ten" The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) is reported to have said.

By performing Salat the Muslim is able to translate his belief in Allah into a dynamic living force that keeps him

closer to Allah and that practically keeps him away from filth and sin. The above Hadith (saying of the prophet (A.p.p.h.) means that he who abstains from performing prayer deliberately – not due to laziness or ignorance-is thereupon an apostate and should be dealt with as such.

As a pillar of Islam, prayer is enjoined upon everyone be he free or in bondage, rich or poor, healthy or bedridden, travelling or staying at home. No person who has reached the age of maturity is exempt from it[2]. As food is required at regular intervals to sustain body, so prayer is needed to sustain the soul of man. It is the spiritual diet of a Muslim whereof he partakes five times a day and forms the foundation of his spiritual and moral development. Just as man has an instinctive need and desire to sustain his body with food, so man stands in need of an ideal, an embodiment of all that is sublime, perfect, beautiful and powerful which can satisfy his innermost urge by virtue of being above and beyond his comprehension . Prayer purifies the soul of all minor sins. When a person feels himself in the Divine presence five times a day, his mind is purified of all dross.

In the systematic ordering of prayer with its repetition and continuity at regular intervals five times daily, man is provided with a most valuable defence against the inroads of materialism; nothing can keep him from remembering Allah: "Men whom neither merchandise nor sale (and purchase) beguileth them from remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer" [3]

By being called back from the midest of his worldly engagements to the Divine presence five times a day, a Muslim is reminded of his duty to his Lord in all his activities and that every act of his is predestined by the will

of Allah. Moreover by being in continual contact with his Lord, man is equipped morally to resist all kinds of sins and temptations, to remain steadfast at times of trial and adversity, to protect himself against the weaknesses of flesh and mischief of the immoderate appetites: "Prayers preserve from lewdness and iniquity, and verily remambrance of Allah is more important and Allah knowth what ye do"[4]

Salat, thus, has a significant influence upon the moral and mental outlook of man. It leads him to virtuous deeds and imbues his heart with the love of faith .It makes hypocricy, pride miserliness, dishonesty and whatever amounts to a defiance of Allah repugnant to him. There is no more secure and comforting refuge for the believer than Salat; it is the greatest shelter and haven of peace, peace of mind and sense of security. In the Divine persence which he exercises five times a day man feels a sense of security which no materialistic power or authority can provide him with. It is a sense of belonging to a super power with which no other power on earth or in heaven can compare. Allah Almighty says: "Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah; for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction" [5]

If the major value of prayer is to be found in extending that spiritual cord between the Lord and His slaves, the worshippers. are required to keep their bodies and garments pure and clean ; thus physical purification is a supplement to spiritual one.

Purification of the body, garment and place of prayers is a necessary preliminary to prayer. It directs one's

attention to the purification of the soul, the primary aim of prayer: "Verily. Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly. And He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean" [(6)]

Jabir reported that the prophet (A.p.p.h.) said: "the key to paradise is prayer and the key to prayer is purification" [(7)] When the worshipper purifies himself five times a day he keeps himself clean most of the day on the physical level; there is no doubt that this helps keep him physically healthy and socially welcomed. The prophet (A.p.p.h.) is reported to have said: "If a man stays beside a stream of running water in which he washes his body five times a day. would any fifth remain on his body? So is the praying person".[(8)] Praying requires freedom from all impurities.

Impurities include all kinds of filth, pollution or defilement which renders a matter in its natural state (taste, odour or colour) unpleasant. These can be (1) blood or pus and the like from any part of the body, (2) excrement, urine, vomit (3), products of animals slaughtered unlawfully (4) the pig and its by-products, (5) liquor and other intoxications, (6) white sticky prostatic fluid discharged from the genitals as a result of involuntary excitement,(7) female genital fluid secreted (whether voluntary or involuntary),(8) menstrual and postnatal discharges, (9) sperm secreted during coitus, sleep or stimulation of the genitals.

To attain purification, the Muslim has to shun the items 3,4 and 5 altogether. As for items 8and 9, one cannot perform prayer or read the Quran until purification is attained by washing the body and performing ablution. With regard to the rest of the items the Muslim purifies

himself by cleansing the part of the body affected. This is followed by ablution.

By constantly cleansing one's body, keeping one's garments clean and decent, and abstaining from eating and drinking all those things that Allah prohibited (alcoholics, intoxications, pigs' meat and their by-products which the latest scientific researches have proved harmful both to mental and physical health). Prayer helps keep the Muslim spiritually, mentally and physically sound.

9.2 Ablution

Ablution may be categorized in three ways: (a) Minor Ablution (Wudhu) (b) Major Ablution (ghusl) and (c) Dry Ablution (Tayammum)..

Ablution, whether minor, major or dry, has been enjoined on the believers in the Quran (verse 6 chapter 5) Allah Almighty says:

"O ye who believe, when ye rise up for prayers, wash your face and your hands up to the elbows, and lightly rub your heads and wash your feet up to the ankles. And if Ye are unclean purify yourselves. And if Ye are sick or on a journey or one of you cometh from the closet, or Ye have had contact with women, and Ye find no water, then go to a clean high ground and rub your face and your hands with some of it, Allah would not place a burden on you, but He would purify you and perfect His grace upon you "that Ye may give thanks".

9.2.1 Minor Ablution (Wudhu)

Minor Ablution (Wudhu) is one of the foremost pre-requisites of prayer (Salat). It comes next after

purification in the order of performance. The prophet (A.p.p.h.) said "the best of man's deeds is the performance of prayer, and the true believer is the one who perfects his minor ablution (Wudhu)"It goes without saying that before minor ablution the Muslim should cleanse his private parts (anal or genital) with water after urinating or evacuating the bowel. Then ablution is performed in the following manner and order.

1- Intention: making the intention to perform ablution saying "Bismillah: In the name of Allah I perform ablution.
2- Washing both hands thoroughly up to the wrist three times.
3-Rinsing the mouth; it is a sunnah (an act of the prophet (A.p.p.h.) to be done voluntarily) that the rinsing should be preceded with cleaning one's teeth.
4-Sniffing in water from the cup of one's right palm and blowing it out with the help of one's left hand three times.
5-Washing the face from forehead down to chin and from earlobe to earlobe three times. If a man has a thick beard, it is sufficient to brush it with wet fingers till water reaches the roots of the hair.
6-Washing both arms up to the elbow thrice beginning with the right arm then the left one.
7-Wiping the top of the head with water once, and the inside of the ears with the forefinger, and the outside of the ears with the thumb.
Finally (8) Washing the feet up to the ankles starting with the right foot three times.

9.2.1 Things That Invalidate Ablution

Ablution becomes invalid if any of the following occurs:

1-The discharge of urine, wind, blood excrement and semen,
2- Having a deep sleep.
3-Touching one's sexual organs deliberately with bare hands.
4- Vomitting; if it is a mouthful.
5- Losing one's consciousness

9.2.2 Major Ablution (Al-Ghusl)

Major ablution is the washing of every part of the body in order to purify it, it is done in the following cases.
(1)On embracing Islam.
(2) After having sexual intimacy or intercourse.
(3) At the end of the women's monthly period "menstruation"
(4) When bleeding stops after giving birth " postnatal bleeding"
(5) When a person dies, his body is washed in the same manner.

9.2.2.1 How to do Major Ablution

1-First, have the intention to do it, there is no need to express it verbally.
2- Second, wash your private parts clean
3- third: perform the minor ablution (Wudhu)
Fourth: Wash your entire body thoroughly.

9.9.3 Dry Ablution (Tayammum) One resorts to dry ablution (Tayammum) when water becomes rare, unavailable or when the use of water is harmful to the user for some disease or other. One can perform dry ablution in the following manner.

1-Develop the intention to do Tayammum.
2-Say Bismillah "In the name of Allah"
3-Tap a thin film of soil of a high clean ground with your open palms.
4- Shake off any dust that settles on them.
5- Wipe your face once with your palms.
6 -Repeat steps 3 and 4.
7-Wipe your right arm from the fingers up to the elbow and back with your left hand.
8-Finally, wipe your left arm in the same way with your right hand.

Note

What spoils ablution also spoils Tayammum. However, if after performing Tayammum one finds water, it becomes incumbent upon one to do (Wudhu)

9.3The prayer call (Adhan) The Adhan is delivered in every mosque or in any gathering for congregational prayer five times a day, by a male prior to each of the five daily prayers. The Caller (Mu'dthin) chants aloud the following sentences in the sequence given:

Allah is greatest, Allah is greatest الله أكبر الله أكبر

Repeat

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah

Repeat أشهد أن لا أله إلا الله

I bear witness that Mohammad is the messenger of Allah

Repeat أشهد أن محمد رسول الله

Come to prayer, come to prayer حي على الصلاه

Come to success, come to success حي على الفلاح

Allah is greatest, Allah is greatest الله أكبر الله أكبر

Repeat
There is no god but Allah.

لا إله الا الله

Note
To the dawn prayer call (Adhan) the following sentence is added" prayer is better than sleep, prayer is better than sleep" الصلاه خير من النوم الصلاة خير من النــوم

It is recommended that the hearer of the prayer call should repeat silently the call, but instead of saying "come to prayer, come to success, he would say " there is no strength nor power but with Allah" لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله

The one who calls to prayer should perform ablution and face the Qiblah (the direction of Mecca) before delivering the Adhan. He should also refrain from talking once he has started with Adhan.

9.4 The Performance of Prayer

Each of the five daily prayers consists of a number of "bowings" (Rakaa), each rakaa'is made up of two prostrations (Sajda) followed by a sitting. The rakaa is performed in the following manner: [(9)]

1-After performing ablution the Muslim stands erect in absolute humility to Allah, facing the direction of Mecca (Qibbla) with the intention of prayer; he says:
2-Allah is Greatest with the fingers open on each side of the face with the palms facing the front, very near (or touching), the lobs of the ears.
3-Recites the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an (Al-Fatihah) while standing, the hands are usually folded right above the naval against the front of the body. However, it is permissible to have the hands downwards beside the thighs.
4- Recites some verses from the Qur'an
5-He says: Allah is Greatest and bends his trunk, depending with his hands on his kness.
6-While in this position he repeats three times "Glory be to my Lord" سـبحان الله

7-Stands erect again. saying "Allah hears him who praises Him" سمع الله لمن حمـده

8-Falls down to a position of prostration while doing so he says: Allah is Greatest. During prostration (sujuud) the nose, the fore- head, the palm with fingers slightly spread out, and the knees touch the ground. In this position he should repeat thrice "Glory be to my Lord, the most high"سبحان ربي الأعلى

Prayer is concluded with a second sitting in which Al-Tashahnd (bearing witness) is recited .
9- Sits back on the heels saying "Allah Akbar"Allah is Greatest.
10-Performs a second prostration repeating exactly what he has done in the first.

9.4.1 Bearing Witness (At –Tashahud)

"Bearing witness" consists of two parts, the first part is recited after the second rakaa; (B) The second portion is recited after the third or fourth rakaa'.

The worshipper says:
1-Peace be on thee, O prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.
2- Peace be on us and on the righteous servants of Allah.
3-I bear witness that there is no god except Allah.
4-And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

In the second sitting after the third or fourth rakaa', the worshipper concludes his prayer with the remaining portion of At-Tashahud.
1-Allah! Exalt Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad
2-As Thou didst exalt Ibrahim and the followers of Ibrahim.
3-And bless Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad.
4-As Thou didst bless Ibrahim and the followers of Ibrahim in the world.
5-Surely, Thou art the Praised, the Glorious.
6-{Optional}. Our Lord! cause not our hearts to stray after Thou hast guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Thy presence !Thou , only Thou art the Bestower.

The prayer is finally conducted by turning the face to the right, and then to the left, saying in each case: "Peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allah".

9.5 Prostration of Forgetfulness (Sujuud As-Sahaw)

If any of the main components of prayer is forgotten and remembered later while still praying, the worshipper performs an additional prostration (Sajda) to make up for all that has been forgotten. During this prostration, the worshipper pleads to Allah to forgive him for what he has missed.

9.6 Obligatory {Fard} and Optional (Sunnah) Prayers

The obligatory {Fard} prayers are enjoined upon the Muslim by Allah, and should never be left out for any reason, as long as he lives. If a person cannot pray for some physical illness or weakness while standing erect, he can pray while sitting down, if he cannot perform it while sitting, he can perform it while lying in bed moving which ever limb he can move. If that is impossible for any mishap he can use his forefinger and move it the way a praying person does while reciting the necessary passages from the Quran. However, even if that becomes difficult the handicapped can move his eyes in prayer while reciting the Quran. Thus there is no exemption from praying the five daily obligatory prayers.

The Optional prayers (Sunnah) are performed either before or after the obligatory ones. They are enjoined by the prophet (A.p.p.h.) and are performed in imitation of him. If the worshipper performs them he is rewarded by Allah, but if he does not, no punishment is incurred.

9.7 Five Prayers

Prayers were instituted when the prophet (A.p.p.h.) ascended to Heaven after the night journey from the Holy Mosque in Mekka to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem as has been described in the Quran: (Surat Al-Israa, verse 1)

"Glorified be He who carried His servant by night from the inviolable Mosque to Al Aqsa Mosque, the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed, that We might show him Our signs! Lo! He, only He is the Hearer, the One who sees"

Table I

The following table shows the number of "rakaas" for the "Fard" prayers prescribed throughout the day: As was mentioned before, some of the "Sunnah" prayers are performed before the "Fard" others are performed after it.

Prayers

Name of Prayer	Sunnah Before	Fard	Sunnah After
1-Fajr {Dawn Prayer}	2	2	
2-Zuhar {Noon Prayer}	2 or 4	4	2or 4
3-Juma {Friday Prayer}	2	2	Or 2
4-Asr {After- noon Prayer}		4	
5-Maghrib{ Sunset Prayer}		3	2
6-Isha {Night Prayer}		4	2 0r 3

9.7.1Dawn prayer (Al-Fajr)

These are two "rakaas" to be performed from dawn until sunrise. Verses from the Quran are recited in both bowings audibly. The two "Fard" rakaas are preceded by two Sunnah ones. Recitations in the Sunnah are silent.

9.7.2 Noon Prayer (Az-Zuhr)

The "Fard" prayer consists of four rakaas to be performed any time after midday up to mid –afternoon. Verses from the Quran are recited inaudibly. On Friday however, as all the Muslims are called upon to participate

in this weekly celebration, the prayer is shortened to two rakaas rather than four. This is done only on Friday to make it easy for the old, the weak and the sick to participate in this weekly congregational prayer without suffering discomfort .The Quran here is recited audibly. The "Fard" prayer may be preceded by two or four Sunnah rakaas and / or followed by two or four Sunnah rakaas.

9.7.3 <u>Afternoon Prayer</u> (Al- Asr)

These are four rakaas to be performed between midafternoon until sunset. Quranic recitations are done inaudibly: Voluntary prayers are not encouraged after Asr prayer.

9.7.4 <u>Sunset prayer</u> (Maghreb)

Sunset prayer consists of there rakaas to be performed just after sunset until twilight. Recitations from the Quran are recited aloud in the first two rakaas but recitation is inaudible in the third rakaa.

9.7.5 <u>Night Prayer</u> (Isha)

These are four rakaas to be performed from twilight until before dawn. Recitations here, as in the Sunset prayer are audible in the first two rakaas, and are inaudible in the remaining rakaas which end with the second sitting. These may be followed with two or three Sunnah rakaas.

The five prayers have to be performed at the Set time when- ever possible; by preference they should be performed in a congregation [10]. The prayers need not be held in a mosque, but may be performed in one's dwelling-house or any other place, so long as it is clean. Failure to

observe prayer within the prescribed time without a valid reason such as sleep or forget- fulness or any legitimate excuse is sinful. Missed prayers can be made up for later on. Anas Ibn Malik reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "He who forgets to pray or oversleeps shall pray when he remembers, there is no other atonement for it save that "

9.8 The Congregational Prayers

The congregational prayer is preferred to the individual one for two reasons:-

-1 The believer is recompensed for every step he makes towards the mosque, besides the credit he gains for congregational prayers equals twenty times the ones he gains from individual prayers.

-2 There is great possibility that the congregational prayers shall be accepted by Allah, but the individual ones may not for some reason or other. On the authority of Mu'adh Ibn Jabal, it is reported that the prophet said: "It is not one sixth nor one tenth of a man's devotion which is acceptable to Allah, but only such portion thereof as he offers with understanding and true devotional spirits".

That is why the five prayers are preferably performed in a mosque or the like. The leader of the congregation (Imam) conducts the prayers. He stands in front, the remainders forming straight lines behind him, all standing shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot. When the congregation leader is ready to begin the prayer the prayer-caller (muadhin) calls signalling that the prayer is ready to commence.

The late-arrivals to congregational prayers have to join the last line saying "Allah is greatest " and to conform closely to the leader until the prayer comes to an end. Then they rise to make up for what they have missed. Congregational prayers are valid at any clean, chaste place and even if the congregation consists of two persons only .In that case, one of the two acts as leader (Imam) and the other stands slightly behind him to the right and follows his lead.

The leader (Imam) should possess certain qualifications. An Imam usually should be a male believer in full control of his faculties who is efficient at the recital of the Quran.

The follower of the leader in prayer should so discipline his movements as to follow the leader closely. The follower is also under the obligation to correct the leader during his recitation of the Quran if anything escapes the latter's memory. The follower also may say: "Subhan Allah" (Glorified is Allah) if the leader has forgotten anything essential to the validity of prayer. A woman may clap her hands for correction.

9.9 Friday Prayer {Salatul Juma}

The Friday prayer is a weekly celebration in which every Muslim is invited to participate. It is a congregational prayer performed at noon and thus replaces the noon prayer of the other week days. It is obligatory for every Muslim, who is neither sick nor on a journey. A sermon should precede the prayer and the congregation should not be less than four including the Imam.

The Quran instructs the Muslims to suspend work during Friday prayer and calls upon them to hasten to join it for its supreme value "O ye who believe! when the call is heard for prayers on Friday, hasten to remembrance of Allah and leave your trading".

Friday is the Muslims' weekend; that day is to be devoted to rest and worship. The Muslim is invited to go to the Mosque when he hears the first call to the Friday prayer and to listen attentively to the sermon delivered by the Imam. After his sermon the Imam conducts the Friday prayer which consists of two rakaas. The Juma' prayer may be preceded by Sunnah rakaas.

9.10 Other Occasional Prayers

9.1o.1 Taraweeh Prayers (Relief –Producing Prayers)

These are optional prayers performed in the month of Ramadan after the night prayer. They consist of eight rakaas or more up to twenty with a sitting after each two rakaas concluded with reciting at-tashahud. These may be performed in a congregation or individually, in a mosque or at home.

9.10.2 Eid Prayers (Feast Prayers)

In the morning of the first day of each of the two Muslim feasts: the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast (Eidul Fitr) and the Feast of Sacrifice (Eidul Adha) congregational prayers are held. They are performed just after sunrise and consist only of two rakaas. Although these are similar to Friday prayers, they are different in that in the first rakaa' before reciting the Fatiha, seven "Takbirat"(Allah is Greatest) are said as well as five

"Takbirat" in the second rakaa'. The Feast prayers are usually performed in an open area, but they can be celebrated in a mosque as well.

After performing these prayers, Muslims visit their relatives, starting with the poor, the weak and sick, offer them presents, donations, then they exchange visits with each other and celebrate the Feast.

9.10.3 The Funeral Prayer

This is a form of prayer performed without bowing or prostration. The prayer here is an invocation to the Almighty to forgive the deceased. However, before the prayer the body of the dead is washed clean with soap several times until it is cleaned of visible impurities. Then it is wrapped in a shroud made up of three white cotton sheets covering the whole body from head to toes.

After that, the body is placed in a coffin and carried to a mosque where it is put with its face towards the Qiblah. Finally the Imam stands near to the body facing the Qiblah with the followers behind him in lines. The Imam starts the prayer in the following manner:

(1) He declares his intention to pray for the deceased one

Saying: Allah Akbar (Allah is Greatest) the followers repeat that.

(2)He recites the Opening of the book silently and the followers do the same thing.

(3) The Imam raises his voice saying Allahu Akbar and recites the second part of Atta-tashahud.

(4) Again he says Allahu Akbar and supplicates Allah

to forgive the dead , and living in any proper way.

(5)Again he says Allahu Akbar and asks Allah to forgive him, his parents, his relatives and friends .

(6)Thus the funeral prayer is finished and the coffin is carried to the grave yard where it is burried. It is recommended that the grave be simple not decorated or raised above the level of the ground.

9.11 Curtailing Prayers (Qasr As-Salat)

Prayers may be shortened while on a journey of about 48 miles from the dwelling place, provided that the journey lasts for 15 days or more. The shortening continues until the traveller returns home. However, if in the course of the journey, the traveller changes his plans and decides to stay for more than 15 days, he will be expected to resume his prayers as a non-traveller.

The Qasr (shortening prayers) requires that the traveller should shorten all "Fard" prayers consisting of four rakaas (Zuhr, Asr and Isha) to two rakaas. (The dawn and the sunset prayers are not curtailed .All sunnah prayers are suspended.

When going on a long journey in the course of which two prayers or more fall due, the traveller, may shorten and join these prayers in advance before he starts his journey. This is done to alleviate the responsibilities of the travellers and enable them to defend themselves in the early days of Islam.

The Quran states:

"When Ye journey about the earth, it is no sin for you to curtail your prayers if you fear that those who disbelieve may attack you"[(11)]

9.12 Notes

(1) Abdallah-Ibn Umar-narrates that he heard the prophet (A.p.p.h.) say: "Islam is found on five pillars, bearing witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His servant and apostle, establishing of Salat, paying of Zakat, performance of Hajj and fasting Ramadan. Thus it is the means of salvation and the dividing line between a Muslim and an apostate. Allah Almighty says: " And establish prayer, and be not of those who ascribe partners (unto Him).

(2) Surat Ar-Rum verse 31
"And keep up the prayer, and do not be of those who associate partners with Allah"

(٢) سورة الروم آية ٣١
"وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلاةَ وَلاَ تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ "

(3) Surat An-Nur 37
"Men whom neither commerce nor trade diverts from the Rememberance of Allah, and keeping up the prayer"

(٣) سورة النور آية ٣٧
" رِجَالٌ لاَّ تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلاَ بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَلاة "

(4) Surat Al-Ankabut 45
"Surely prayer forbids obscenity and maleficence; and indeed the Remembrance of Allah is greater and Allah knows hatever (deeds) you work out"

(٤) سورة العنكبوت آية ٤٥
"إِنَّ الصَّلاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ "

(5)Surat Ar-Raad 28

"The ones who have believed and whose hearts (feel) composed with the Remembrance of Allah-verilyin Rembrance of Allah the hearts are composed!"

(٥) سورة الرعد آية ٢٨

" الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلاَ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ "

(6) Surat Al-Baqarah 222

"Surely Allah loves the ones constantly repenting and He loves the ones constantly purifying themselves"

(٦)سورة البقرة آية ٢ ٢٢

" إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ "

(7) Narrated by Jaber Ibn Abdallah quoting the Prophet (Ap.p.h.)

(٧) قال جابر بن عبد الله عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

" مفتاح الجنة الصلاة ومفتاح الصلاة الوضوء (الطهارة)" (الترمذي)

(8) Hadith, narrated by Abu Hurriera quoting the Prophet (A.p.p.h.)

(٨) حديث شريف

"قال أبو هريرة رضي الله عنه أنه سمع رسول الله يقول: أرأيتم لو أن نهرا بباب أحدكم يغتسل فيه كل يوم خمس مرات هل يبقى من درنه شيء قالوا لا يبقي من درنه شيء قال فذلك مثل الصلوات الخمس يمحو الله بهن الخطايا" الترمذى والنسائي والدارمى

(9) The Term rakaa' is used for two different things:

(a)The specific act of bowing

(b) all the ceremonies from standing erectand reciting the Fatiha to the second prostration.

(10)Allah Almighty says:

"Verily prayer is enjoined on the faithful at certainprescribed times"

(١٠) سورة النساء آية ١٠٣

"إِنَّ الصَّلاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَاباً مَّوْقُوتاً "

(١١) سورة النساء آية ١٠١

"وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَن يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُواً مُّبِيناً "

Chapter Ten

Az-Zakat the "Poor Due"

1o.1 Definition

The word "Zakat" is derived from the Arabic word "Zakaa" which has two meanings: a)increased b)purified.
However, it is used in the Islamic context to encompass both meanings, as it is believed that when the Muslim pays the poor due his wealth increases rather than decreases by the will of Allah.(1) Moreover, this very act purifies both the Muslim and his wealth. Zakat in Islamic jurisprudence means the amount of money paid to the poor annually on an accumulated wealth during a whole year.

Zakat is the third pillar of Islam; Allah Almighty imposed it on all Muslims and gave them orders regarding it in some 32 Quranic verses. In most of them it is coupled with prayers and this emphasises the importance which the Quran places upon the Zakat. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

"Successful indeed are the believers. Those who perform their prayers with all solemnity and full submissiveness. And those who turn away from vain talk (Falsehood and all that Allah has forbidden). And those who pay Zakat". (Surat 23 verse 1,2,3)(2)

Allah also says:

"And be steadfast in prayer, pay the Zakat, and whatever good you send forth before you for your souls, you shall find it with Allah, for Allah sees well what you do"

Allah has promised all who pay the Zakat great reward. This is illustrated in the verse:-

"And establish regular prayer, and pay the Zakat and loan to Allah a goodly loan-whatever good you send forth

before you for your souls, you shall find it in Allah's presence, better and greater in reward".

Zakat is a form of worship with which a Muslim pleases his Lord particularly if he pays it in full and contently not for the purpose of showing off but for gaining Allah's forgiveness and blessing. Thus the Muslim escapes the torture of the Hell fire and gains eternal Paradise. It is reported that the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said "There is no slave (of Allah) who performs the five prayers, fasts Ramadan, pays Zakat and avoids the seven deadly sins except the doors of Paradise are opened to him and is invited to enter with peace"

Muhammad (A.p.p.h.) urged the Muslims to pay Zakat in many of his sayings. For example, it is related that he addressed the people saying:

"O people, He (Gabril) came to me from my Lord while I was asleep and said to me: O Muhammad, those who pray but do not practise Zakat, their prayers are not acceptable, and those who practise Zakat but do not pray, their Zakat is not acceptable. He who withholds Zakat is on the Day of Judgement equal to he who has not practised it"

Zakat is obligatory on every sane, free Muslim who has accumulated wealth for a whole year which reaches a certain amount (a nisab). Those who refrain from paying their Zakat Allah's punisment: will be severe on them on the day of Judgement:

"And woe to those who join gods with Allah, who do not pay Zakat and do not believe in the Hereafter" likwise

"Woe to the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers, those who would be seen (at worship) but abstain from good works" And also:

"And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, announce unto them a most grievous penalty on the Day when it will (all) be heated in the fire of Hell, and their foreheads, sides and backs will be branded there with (and they will be told): This is what you hoarded up for yourselves; taste of that which you hoarded". Again the Quran says:

"And let not those who covetously hoard up that which Allah has given them of His Bounty think that it is better for them-nay it will be attached the worse for them. That which they have hoarded avariciously will be as a collar on their necks on the Day of Judgement."

The Muslim ruler is responsible for collecting Zakat by force if some people refrain from paying it optionally. In the aftermath of the death of Muhammad, some Arabs abstained from paying the Zakat, Caliph Abu Bakr (May Allah bless him) did not hesitate to fight them to force them to pay it saying :"By Allah if they refuse to give me a shackle of a camel that they used to give to the Prophet I 'll fight them" That is why some scholars believe that the one who refuses the obligation of Zakat is an unbeliever who must repent or be killed like the one who apostates.

10.2 Kinds of Zakat

There are three categories of Zakat: two obligatory: Zakat Al Fitre and Zakat Al-Mal and one optional that is called "Sadaka".

10.2.1 Sadaka
"Optional Charity"

The rich Muslims are encouraged to pay optional charity to the poor whenever possible. They have to start distributing such charity on their relatives, then their closest neighbours. The best charity is the one given in secret without humiliating the recipient. However, the charity given to the most nagging relative or neighbour is more rewarded by Allah. The best example is provided by prophet Muhammad (A.p.p.h.) whom it is related would share his food with his neighbour even it were a date.

When the Muslims immigrated from Mecca to Medina with the prophet (A.p.p.h.) they left behind them their wealths and properties as they left the town in secret in the heart of darkness. Nevertheless, the people of Medina received them in their houses and contently shared with them their properties and even their wives. If one had two wives he would divorce one of them to be married to one of the immigrants if the two parties agreed. This was an extreme form of self-sacrifice created by the brother- hood of Islam.

Islam calls upon the individual to spend freely in the ways that please the heart of the donor, and evoke generosity, goodness, reverence and obedience to Allah, Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Quran: "The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like that of a grain of corn; it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He pleases; Allah cares for all and knows all things." (Surat 1:261) the Messenger of Allah upon whom peace be, said "Charity appeases the anger of the Lord and wards off the agony of death"

Thereupon, a Muslim should voluntarily pay Charity to gain Allah's grace and to help the poor and the needy. It is unlawful for the one giving charity to remind the recipient of his generosity, to reproach him or to make a show with his charity. Allah warns us against that: "O, Ye who believe do not inviolate your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury, like those who spend their property to be seen by men"(Suart 1:264) A Muslim should not give what is unlawfully gained as charity; charity is to be paid out of what is gained by ways acceptable to Allah. Muhammad (Ap.p.h.) is reported to have said: "O people! Allah is good and accepts only what is good."

The Messenger of Allah (A.p.p.h.) said Allah the Almighty shall say on the Day of Judgement; son of Adam! I was ill and you did not visit me." He will reply: "O my Lord! How could I visit you and you are the Lord of the worlds? Allah shall say "did you not know that my slave so – and –so was ill and you did not visit him if you had visited him you would have found Me with him" O, son of Adam! I asked you for food and you did not give it to me! He will say: "O my Lord! How could I give you food and you are the Lord of the worlds? Allah shall say: "Did you not know that my slave so-and –so asked you for food and you did not give it to him? Did you not know that if you had given it to him, you would have found that with Me? O son of Adam I asked you to quench my thirst and you did not? He will say: O my Lord! How could I quench your thirst –you the Lord of the Worlds? Allah shall reply: "My slave so-and –so asked you to quench his thirst and you did not. If you had given him to drink, you would have found that with Me": This is related by Muslim. (a well-known Muslim Scholar)

It is clear from the above mentioned "Hadith"(Saying of the Prophet) that to visit a sick person is considered a charity, and to feed someone who is hungry or to give some water to a thirty person is also a charity for which the donor is bountly rewarded by Allah.

10.2.2 Zakat Al-Fiter
"Alms Due at the End of the Month of Ramadan"

Zakat Al –Fiter is paid at the end of the month of Ramadan to perfect the fasting and to make up for the aberrations a Muslim may commit involuntarily while fasting. Therefore it should be distributed before Eid (Feast) prayer, otherwise it becomes mere charity. Ibn Abbas-one of the renown Muslim scholars quotes the Prophet (A.p.p.h) saying "Zakat Al fitre is made obligatory to purify the person of his obscene talk and absurd deeds during the fast and also to provide food to the needy. Whoever distributes fitr charity before Eid prayer will have it accepted. Whoever distributes it after Eid prayer his Zakat will be no more than an ordinary charity" (Narrated by Ahmad and Ibn Maaja- both authorities on Hadith)

Zakat Al Fitr is a must and a duty imposed on all Muslims, provided the Muslim is sane, free and possesses the amount of money after covering the necessary expenses for himself and all his dependents for a day and night.

In the early days of Islam the amount of Zakat was given in kind; it was a saa' (a measure) of dates, or barly, or rice or corn, or anything else edible for each individual. Many scholars, particularly those of Hanafi sect, prefer paying Zakat Al-Fitr in cash, that makes it easy for both

the donor and recipient and estimate that amount as equivalent to one third of an American Dollar. They say this is more useful to the poor since they know better what they need-it might be food and it might be medicine or clothes.

Though it is commonly agreed that Zakat Al-Fitr has to be paid before going out to the Eid prayers, it is permitted to offer it a day or two before the end of the month of Ramadan. Other scholars say that it is allowed to do so even from the beginning of Ramadan. However, it is definitely not permitted after the day of the feast, it is then not Zakat, as we mentioned before, but sadaka (charity).

The value of Zakat Al-fitr as a means of perfecting the fasting and purifying the act becomes clear if we consider the following "Hadith". Prophet Muhammad (A.p.p.h.) said: "Fasting in the month of Ramadan lies suspended between the earth and Heaven. It is only raised (to Heaven) by Zakat Al Fiter" If Zakat Al -Fitr purifies the Muslim's soul and helps to have his fasting accepted by Allah, it has also its considerable benefits to society. First, it provides for the poor in a way without humiliating them on the day of the feast. That is explained by the "Hadith". "Relieve them of the necessity of going around (looking for alms) on that day".

Second, on the feast day the poor and rich, alike feel general joy and participate in celebrating its festivities. This sense of brotherhood and equality has far reaching social and psychological results.

Third, though the poor may be recipient of Zakat Al-Fitr, it is incumbent upon him to practise charity himself

on that day. Thus he enjoys the sense of being a giver too and that boosts his morale, and delights his heart. He becomes accustomed to the feeling albeit rare, that he is one to do good and not to have good done to him only.

10.2.3 Zakat Al – Mal
"Alms Due on Wealth"

Zakat Al-Mal is that money paid to the poor (or to the body charged with collecting it and distributing it among the poor) every year, if one has an amount of cash money or its equivalent in properties that equals in value 88.8 grams of gold. That amount of money should have remained in one's possession for a whole year to be eligible to Zakat. In other words, every Muslim, male or female, who at the end of year is in possession of approximately 88.8 grams of gold or more or their equivalent in cash or articles of trade must pay Zakat at the rate of 2.5% of the total amount of the capital. In case of having the assigned amount in cash, the matter is easy. e.g. if a person has three thousand Dollars, he has to give seventy – five Dollars as Zakat to the poor on a yearly basis.

But when a person has wealth in business stocks, or trade articles, he must evaluate his wealth at the end of every year according to their current value and give Zakat at the same rate of two and one half percent of the total value of the wealth.If a person's investment is in immovable property like revenue buildings and industries the rate of Zakat should go by the total net of the income and not of the total value of the whole property.

But if he puts up buildings and houses for trade or selling, Zakat rate should then go by the total value of the entire property. Zakat is levied on live stock such as

camels, cows, buffaloes and goats. Other kinds of livestock are not eligible for Zakat unless they are used as merchandise; then Zakat for trade applies.

Zakat is also imposed on gold and silver if the value reaches the same assigned amount. However, it is exempt from Zakat if it is in the shape of jewelry used for ornamentation except with the Hanafi sect. The rate of Zakat is the same as that imposed on money i.e 2.5% of the total value.

Zakat of agricultural products differ according to the type of irrigation. Those products that depend on easy irrigation such as rain or easily accessible rivers or canals are eligible to ten percent of the total value of the produce. The other products that need using machinery to till and irrigate the land which necessarily involves extra expenses are eligible to Zakat at the rate of five percent only.

10.3 The Recipients of Zakat

Allah has very clearly defined the due recipients of Zakat in the Holy Quran Surat Al-Touba, verse 60. "Alms are for the poor (Al-fuqara) and the needy (Al-maskeen) and those employed to administer the (funds), for those whose hearts have been recently reconciled, and those in slavery, the debtors, and in the way of Allah, and the wayfarers"[(3)]

According to the previous verse we can conclude that the due recipients are as follows:

a- The poor (Al-Fuqara) are those who do not own enough to be liable to pay Zakat; those who do not have enough to carry them through the year, yet they

never humitiate themselves by begging. The Zakat relieves their distress without humiliation.

b- The needy (Al-Masakeen), it is believed, are those who cannot earn their living owing to old age, or sickness or physical handicap. The Zakat supplies them with means whereby they can earn their livelihood.

c- Those employed to administer the funds are the employees appointed by the head of the government. Those have a share in the levied Zakat; amongest them are labourers and public officials. All those are paid according to their respective work.

d- The new Muslim converts, to enable them to settle down and meet their unusual needs. Some of those whose hearts have been recently reconciled and adopted Islam were the rich chiefs of tribes whom the head of the state in the early days of Islam thought it necessary to placate for the good of Islam. However, this was a temporary concession granted to them; some scholars think that it is the right of the head of the state to use placatory measures till the Day of Judgement if he considers it of use to spend some of the revenues of the Zakat upon those whose hearts are inclined towards Islam.

e- Those in slavery, and the prisoners of war; the Zakat can be used to liberate them by paying the ransome money of the latter, as slavery no longer exists.

f- The Muslims in debt, to free them from liabilities incurred under pressing necessities.

g- The Muslims in service of the cause of Allah by means of research and study or propagating Islam or those who fight on a raid or in the Holy War in the way of Allah. This share is to cover their expenses.

h- The Muslim wayfarers who are stranded in a foreign land and are in need of help.

Generally speaking, and in addition to the above stipulations the recipient of Zakat should be Muslim, free, reached maturity and have full command of his intellect and be wise in dispensing of his share of Zakat.

In the early days of Islam, Zakat was collected and distributed by means of the Islamic state. Nowadays Zakat may be distributed directly to individuals who fall into any of the above mentioned categories or to the welfare organizations which look after them. The contributor should use his best judgement in finding the most deserving beneficiaries. However, he should not seek pride or fame by carrying out this duty .He should make it as covert as possible so that he may not hurt the feelings of the receiver or be accused of hypocrisy or passion for vanity which nullifies all good deeds. Neverthless if the disclosure of the name of the donor and the announcement of the amount paid may encourage others to follow his example and stimulate them to emulate him, then there is no harm in doing so.

10.4 The Objectives of Zakat

Zakat is beneficial to both the individual and the community. With regard to the individuals Zakat has taken care of the poor, the needy, the wayfarers and those in debt or in captivity. Though the welfare of the individuals reflects on the welfare of the community, Zakat has far-reaching impact on the stability and wellbeing of society as a whole. As for the good of the community, this is realized through the insuring of a nobler life for all individuals through the laying aside of a sum of money to be spent in the way of Allah. This money may be invested to create jobs for the unemployed. Thus poverty and deprivation may be eliminated. As is well-known most of the crimes committed by certain individuals are due to poverty and deprivation. When the poor person feels that he is an outcast, his hatred

for the rich, who keep their money back from him, grows. Zakat is the means to establish love and brotherhood amongst people rich and poor alike.

Nowadays slavery is illegal in almost all the countries around the globe, neverthless some sorts of disguised slavery are still practised all over the world. Shares of Zakat may be used to eliminate these diverse aspects of slavery, such as prostitution and child labour.

A very important object of Zakat is the moral and psychological satisfaction that the person who pays Zakat voluntarily gets. He feels that he is contributing to the building of his society and to the happiness of its members. By doing so he enjoys a peace of mind and a sense of security and freedom from anxiety and confusion, rare in most of the societies.

Thus Zakat as stipulated by Allah Almighty is beneficial to both the donor and the recipient and creates peace and harmony in the society as a whole. Blessed are those in "whose wealth is a recognized right (for the needy)"

10.5 Notes

1-That which ye lay out for increase through the property of (other) people will have no increase with Allah, but that which Ye lay out for Zakat, seeking the countenance of Allah, (will increase). It is these who will get a recompense multiplied.

(2) Surat Al-Mu'minun verses 1:4

(٢) سورة المؤمنون الآيات من ١ : ٤

" قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (١) الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ (٢) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ (٣) وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ "

(٣) سورة التوبة آية ٦٠

"إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ "

Chapter Eleven

6-As Siyam "Fasting"

11.1 Definition

Fasting is the fourth of the five pillars on which Islam is built .[1]The Arabic verb "yasoom" means to refrain from . In the Islamic context it came to mean to abstain from eating, drinking and having sexual intercourse in accordance with the verse of the Quran: "Now therefore go unto them and seek what Allah-has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct from the black thread, then observe the fast till nightfall."(The black thread means the darkness of night and the white thread means the streak of light of day at dawn).

However, the Muslim is not required to abstain from food, drink and women only, but he should not indulge in obscene speech. falsehood in speech or action , lying, lustful looks and calumny, as well.

The Prophet said: "while Fasting, you shall not indulge in obscene speech or boisterous talk. If some insults you or quarrels with you tell him: "I am one who fasts, so I seek refuge with my Lord "The prophet also said: " he who does not abstain from falsehood in words or deeds, Allah has no need for him to abstain from his food and drink."

One day the prophet passed by two women who, while fasting, were gossiping, he said: "These two women abstained from what Allah had ordered them to do and indulged in what Allah had forbidden them to do." Some scholars believe that those forbidden things spoil one's fast. They base their verdict on the prophet's warning that "five things spoil man's fast-lying, slander, calumny, the false oath and the lustful look."

Fasting is an ancient form of worship recognized by previous religions-even heathen ones. It constituted an essential part of every religion. That is because fasting has considerable merits, some of these are spiritual and moral, others are social and physical.

However, this chapter on Siam attempts to answer most of the questions on fasting, its merits, its timing, the exempted from fasting, kinds of fast, I'tikaf and the night of power.

11.2 Fasting: An Ancient Form of Worship

Allah Almighty said in the Holy Quran: "You who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint." It is evident from this verse that fasting is an ancient form of worship, prescribed for Muslims as well as for other nations which preceded them ever since the days of Adam.

Nowhere in the books of the Old Testament do we find any definite text to prove that fasting was prescribed. We simply find praise of fasting and commendation of those who fast. It is known that Moses had fasted for fourty days and this proves that fasting was considered a form of worship. Nowadays, Jews fast one week in remembrance of the devastation of Jerusalem and they also fast one day in August. It is reported that the Jews were ordered in the Torah to fast the tenth day of the seventh month. They used to fast that day together with its night and it is probably they used to term it ashoura. There are other fasting days which they observe

Likewise, there is no evidence in the known gospels of the New Testament to prove the obligatory nature of fasting so far as Christians are concerned. Fasting is

simply regarded as a recommended rite. The best-known and oldest of Christian fasts is that of Lent, which precedes Easter. It is the same fasting period observed by Moses, and Jesus and his Apostles. Church Leaders have prescribed other forms of fast including abstenence from eating all animal products and their by-products, such as meat, chicken, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, etc. There are differences however among various churches with regard to these prescriptions. The early Christians used to follow the fasting procedure observed by the Jews, partaking of only one meal every twenty-four hours. It was later modified to fasting from midnight to mid-day.

Even the pagan religions observed fasting as a form of worship and as a means of sublimating the spirit and purifying the body. The Sabareans of Harran fast from sunrise to sunset for thirty days every year. The Indians also observe fasting for a whole month every year. They fast to attain spiritual elevation, and for that reason, some may fast for a whole year breaking the fast only once on the first day of each month of the twelve months.

11.3 The Merits of Fasting

The Quranic verse quoted at the beginning of the previous section (11.2) ends with the words "that you may (learn) self-restraint" Allah followed up the command to observe fasting by these words. That means that genuine fasting helps the worshipper to overcome his lusts and thereby sets him at the beginning of the road leading to perfection. To take this path, it is necessary to be always on the alert lest those lusts should afflict the heart once more.

Lust is man's prison; lust for sex, lust for power, lust for authority, lust for wealth, lust for food, etc enslaves man and eventually lead to his downfall. Fasting trains man's will and strengthens it. He would have food, drink and women very close to him, yet he abstains from approaching them in obedience to Allah's commandment. This new-gained self-restraint liberates him from the yoke of slavery, the slavery of lust. Once man is freed from all opressive desires, his actions would be controlled by his conscience and guided by his desire to please his Lord . This would be the only desire left with him. That is why fasting enjoys, in the eye of Allah, a grace unparallelled by other acts of piety and worship.

In a "qudsi hadith" (utterance attributed to Allah outside the Quran), Allah says: "All man's work belongs to him. A good deed is repaid from tenfold to seven hundred times." Allah said: "Fasting belongs to Me and I repay it".

The prophet (A.p.p.h) said: "By He in whose hands Mohammad's soul rests, Allah prefers the stench of the mouth of he who fasts to the scent of musk."

11.3.1 The Spiritual and Moral Merits of Fasting

Fasting has far-reaching spiritual and moral merits. The one who fasts is liberated from his carnal desires for 12 hours at least every day during the month of Ramadan. Spiritual sublimation and moral straigtforwardness and commitment would be the result. The farther man runs away from surrendering to his material instincts, the closer he comes to Allah and spiritual values and to moral ethics.

A Muslim who fasts genuinely and abstains not only from food, drinks and women, but also from all acts that invalidate the very essence of fasting, achieves a status of spiritual elevation and perfection of the soul unparallelled, he would enjoy peace of mind and tranquility hardly attained in our materialistically- oriented world.

11.3.2 Social Merits

The statistics in the Islamic world show clearly that the rate of crime decreases drastically in the month of Ramadan. That is one of the most obvious consequences of fasting. Fasting brings people closer to Allah, and directs them towards observing His ordinances. People would be more tolerant and avoid quarrelling on material issues as they would be occupied with more important issues. As the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said (quoted before) :"If someone insults you or quarrels with you tell him, I resort to my Lord, I am one who fasts."

Some claim that fasting makes the rich and those who have taste the kind of hunger from which the poor and those who have not suffer. This claim does not hold much water; if that was the case, fasting would be for the rich only, but as things are Allah made it obligatory for the rich and poor, the haves and the have-nots, the old and the young. The idea is to make people of all classes and different age groups go through the same experience at the same time, creating a sense of brotherhood and oneness which the Muslims exercise when they stand in one line in prayer regardless of their differences, be those of class, colour or race.

The Prophet (A.p.p.h) who provides the example to be followed, used to be generous, and most generous in Ramadan. He used to share his food with his neighbours and his guest even if that were a date. In most of the Muslim world we hear of banquets served everywhere to which the poor are invited. This social solidarity rare in any society creates a sense of brotherhood among the members of the community and spreads social peace and security.

Moreover, Zakat Al-Fitr (the breakfast dues) are distributed in Ramadan. The Zakat purifies the wealth of the donor and gladdens the heart of the recipient, thus creates an atmosphere of rejoice and festivity that overwhelms the society as a whole.

The Ramadan fast was prescribed on the second Monday of the month of Shaa'ban in the second year of the Hijra.

11.3.3 Physical Merits

The physical merits of fasting cannot pass unrecognized. It goes without saying that abstaining from food and drinks for a number of hours every day for a whole month helps to keep the body in shape, particularly if the breakfast and suhur (before dawn) meals are carefully chosen, well-balanced and contain most of the ingredients needed by the body during the day time.

The early Muslims chose to fight most of their important battles in the month of Ramadan, as they felt slimmer, more energetic and more steadfast while fasting. Many people suffering from chronic diseases such as rheumatic aches, high blood pressure and diabetes feel

considerable improvement during fasting. Nevertheless, diabetics should consult their doctors before they fast, for though it may be beneficial to some, it may be harmful to others and those are exempted from fasting.

Some people gain weight during fasting; they make up for the fasting hours by over-eating in the breakfast and suhur meals. Those people miss the essence of fasting and instead of allowing their digesting system to have time for rest and renovation, they tend to spoil that system and even damage it by over-eating, dyspepsia and indigestion. The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) is reported to have said "we are people who never eat unless we feel hungry, and when we eat we never have our stomachs full." Again, he advised the Muslims, "Fill one third of your stomach with food, the second third should be left for drinks and the third part for air for breathing". It is reported about him that his breakfast in Ramadan consisted of a few dates and a glass of milk.

11.4 Why in Ramadan!

Ramadan is a month that enjoys a blessing unparallelled by other months; it is the month in which the Quran was first revealed to Muhammad. Al-bukhari and Muslim both reported that the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said: "With the advent of Ramadan the portals of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and devils are chained."

According to Abu-Hurayra, the Prophet said at the beginning of Ramadan: "A glorious and blessed month has

come. Allah ordained that you fast during it. During this month, the portals of paradise are opened, the gates of hell are closed, and the devils are chained. In this month there is one night which is worth more than one thousand months." This underlines the high pedestal Ramadan occupies in the eyes of our Lord.

For the great merit of Ramadan, Muslims are ordained to fast during it to enjoy its blessing and attain the zenith of spiritual sublimation. The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said: "Whoever fasts during Ramadan out of faith, seeking no reward, will have all his past sins forgiven" Abu Hurayra reported that the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) also said: "Whoever breaks the fast even for one day in Ramadan, without any legitimate reason, can not compensate for it by any period of fasting at another time during the year."

Even in the pre-Islamic period, Ramadan occupied a unique status. The Arabs used to avoid fighting and quarrelling in the vicinity of the Kaa'ba, three months every year namely Rajab, Sha'aban and Ramadan. Muhammad, before receiving the revelation used to spend the month of Ramadan in a cave in Hara'a Mountain, close to Mecca. There, he used to retire and withdraw from all his worldly occupations, contemplating the creation of the universe, invoking a God he did not know, but felt His presence in the universe around him. One of those nights witnessed the glorious revelation of the Quran.

11.5 The Beginning and End of Ramadan.

The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said: "fast when you see it (the new moon) and break the fast when you see it (the new

moon)". Thus the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) defined the means by which to determine the beginning and end of Ramadan. The beginning of Ramadan becomes official when the new moon is seen; as the months of the Islamic Hijri year is a lunar one. The end is officially fixed when the new moon of the next month (Shawwall) is seen. Once the new moon of Ramadan is seen, fasting becomes obligatory for all those who are required to fast it. When the new moon of Shawwall is seen, the fast comes to an end, and everybody should break the fast. The seeing of the new moon becomes official by the testimony of one upright Muslim.

In the event of it being impossible to see the new moon of Ramadan due to weather conditions, then the month of Sha'aban (the month preceding Ramadan) should be completed to thirty days. The same thing should be followed at the end of Ramadan. If the moon of Shawwall (the month following Ramadan) is not seen due to bad weather, then Ramadan should be completed to thirty days.

Now-a-days with the great advancement in the field of astronomy, the beginning and end of Ramadan can be very accurately calculated regardless of weather conditions. This approach is supported by the Prophet's saying: "Fast when you see it, and break the fast when you see it, but if you cannot see it, calculate it."

If the new moon is seen in any country, the people of that country and of every other country falling in the same longitude should observe the fast on the same day. Others falling in different longitudes to the west are bound also to fast on the same day also.

However, some scholars believe that once the new moon is seen by people in any Muslim country, those deputize the Muslims every where. Therefore, it becomes incumbent upon the Muslims to fast wherever they are, whether they have seen the new moon or not.

11.6 How to Fast

To fast, the Muslim has to do the following:

1-The intention: For the fast of Ramadan to be valid, one has to make up one's mind, or formulate the intention during the night preceding the day he will fast. However, intention is essential only in the fard (obligatory fasting). It could be formulated during the day in the tatawwu (voluntary fasting).

2-Abstinence: The one who fasts should abstain from the following:

(1) Food, drink and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset.

(2) Obscene speech, falsehood in speech or action, slander, lying, lustful looks, false oath and calumny. The Prophet said: "Five things spoil a man's fast-lying, slander, calumny, the false oath and the lustful look."

(3) One also has to avoid deliberate vomiting. If one does, one has to fast a day in restitution. Abu Hurayra reported that the Prophet had said: "He who forces himself to vomit shall fast another day instead". However, the Prophet (A.p.p.h.)is reported to have said that "a man's fast is not spoiled for involuntary vomiting or wet dreams"

A man who eats, drinks or sleeps with his wife thinking that it is still before dawn or by mistake or because of forgetfulness, shall continue his fast. The fast is valid, for Allah said "You are not to blame for what you do by mistake, but you are for premeditated acts."

Smoking and chewing gums spoil fasting but things that enter our bodies not through the natural openings such as eye-drops or ear-drops, muscular or intravenous injections do not spoil fast. Abu Muhammad Ibn Hazm summed it up succinctly as follows: "Allah forbade us during the fast from eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, deliberate vomiting and sins. We know of no food or drink which could be consumed through the anus, urethra, ear, eye, nose or from a wound in the abdomen or head. Apart from food and drink we are not prohibited from letting anything reach the stomach".

11.7 Exemptions from Fasting.

Every Muslim who is adult and is in full command of their mental faculties must fast Ramadan. Neverthless, Muslims may be exempted from fasting in the following cases:

1-Women in certain conditions to be explained in details in the following section.
2- Persons on sick bed or on a journey.
3-Old people and those doing hard manual work.
4- Pregnant and nursing women.

These exemptions are made in the light of the Quranic verse: "Fast for a fixed number of days, and who-soever of you is sick or on a journey shall fast an equal number of days later on: Those who can afford to fast (but do not)

shall have to redeem themselves by feeding a poor person. But who-soever does good of his own accord it is better for him, and that you fast is better for you if you did but know."[2] (Surat Al-Baqarah, verse:184)

Scholars think that some of these exemptions require restitution, others need not. Both are fully explained below.

11.7.1 Women in Certain Conditions

Women who are bleeding during menstruation or after child-birth are exempted from fasting. If Ramadan begins while a woman is in that condition, she shall not fast until bleeding ceases. In both cases then, she takes the ritual bath and formulates the intention to fast. If bleeding occurs during the fast, then a woman shall break the fast. When bleeding ceases, she must wash and continue the fast. If bleeding ceases during the night, she can formulate the intention to fast and may postpone taking a bath until after dawn, providing she does so before sun-rise. However, if she does not take a bath before sun-rise, her fast is not valid.

For the missed fasting days, the Muslim woman is required to fast equal number of days in restitution. Aisha, the Prophet's wife said: "In the Prophet's time we were ordered to compensate for fasting days missed in bleeding but were not ordered to perform restitution for our missed prayers".

11.7.2 Persons on Sick Bed and Those on a Journey

Persons on sick-bed and those on a journey are exempted from fasting. However, they are instructed to fast a number of days equal to those they missed during Ramadan. The Quran makes this clear: "(Fast) for a fixed number of days and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey shall fast an equal number of days later on."

The Quran did not mention any specific kind of sickness which exempts a person from fasting during Ramadan. Therefore, it is left to the person's ability if he can tolerate the ailment and still fast, fine if not or if his physician advises to the contrary, he shall do as he feels or advised. However, the Quran contains a general statement and does not specify the severity of pain or degree of danger involved. Some of the early scholars granted the exemption even in the case of a painful finger.

The Muslim is exempted from fast when on a journey, the Quran did not specify the distance, the time or the means of transport used on that journey. So, the stipulation applies in all cases of travel whether a person is travelling on foot, on an animal, by coach, train or by plane.

However, scholars, depending upon the traditions of the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) and of his companions, came to the following conclusions:

1-The Muslim has the right to break his fast while on a journey, whenever he feels like doing so and even before he starts his journey regardless of the distance.
2-If he chooses to fast during the fast he is blameless, if that does not threaten his health.
3- It is preferable to break the fast when the warriors approach the enemy.

In all cases the person has to make up for the missed days with an equal number of days later on.

11.7.3 Pregnant and Nursing Women

Pregnant and nursing women may break the Ramadan fast, but fast an equal number of days when pregnancy or nursing ceases. In other words, the pregnant and the nursing women are in the same position as a traveller, being free to choose between breaking the fast or keeping it.

According to a hadith related by Anas Ibn Malik Al-Ka'bi, the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said: "Allah had relieved a traveller from part of the prayers and relieved him along with pregnant and nursing women from fasting."

Pregnant and nursing women may also break the fast if they fear injury to themselves or their infants. However, they should perform restitution.

11.7.4 Old Age

Scholars have different views with regard to old people. Some scholars are of the opinion that if an old man cannot fast, He can break his fast provided that he feeds an impoverished person for each day he misses, depending on the Quranic verse: "Those who cannot afford it shall have to redeem themselves by feeding a poor person."And on the verse "In no verse does Allah place a burden greater than it can bear." The stipulation regarding old persons applies to persons afflicted with incurable diseases.

Sheikh Mohammed Abdu (a prominent Muslim scholar and one time rector of Al-Azhar) was of the opinion that the people engaged in hard manual work like mining, or prisoners sentenced to hard labour may also break the fast if they can afford to feed a person for each day they miss.

11.8.Kadaa and Kaffara [The Fasting of Atonement]

Fasting is obligatory in three cases: in Ramadan, in case of Kadaa(i.e restitution for fasting days missed in Ramadan) and Kaffara (i.e atonement for breaking a vow or an oath.) However, the Muslim may fast additional days if he wishes, but these are voluntary, for which he is rewarded, but no punishment is incurred if left.

The Muslim performs the Kadaa (fasting of other days) as substitute for those missed in Ramadan consecutively or without sequence. it can also be performed any time of the year. However, it is advisable to perform it as soon as possible in accordance with the Quranic verse: "Be quick in the race for forgiveness."

Kafara is obligatory when a person breaks an oath or a vow. He is required to fast three days in atonement for his perjury.

11.9 Nafl:(Vouluntary Fasting)

Voluntary fasting is recommended on certain days according to the traditions of the Prophet (A.p.p.h.):

-Hafsa said: "the prophet used to fast Mondays and Thursdays."

-Six days during the month of Shawwal (the month following Ramadan)

-The day of Arafat (the day on which pilgrims stand at Mount Arafat in Mecca). However, pilgrims do not fast on that day.

-The Prophet said: "The Arafat fast redeems two years ... one past and one to come."

-The day of Ashura

-The Prophet used to fast most of the days of Sha'aban and Muharam. In all these cases of voluntary fasting, he used to fast one day and break his fast the following day and so did he command his companions and followers.

11.10 I'tikaf (Retreat) During Ramadan

I'tikaf means retiring to a mosque where congregation prayers are performed. It takes place in the last ten days of Ramadan. During this period one should abstain from touching women or participate in any social life such as visiting a sick person or attending a funeral. However, he may leave the mosque to do his normal work or take a bath, otherwise he should spend most of his days and nights in the mosque contemplating, reading the Quran and praying.

Before the advent of Islam Muhammad used to retire to a mount near Mecca for the whole month of Ramadan, to contemplate the creation of the universe as he was dissatisfied with the idols worshipped by his people. After Islam, he used to spend the last ten days of Ramadan in complete retirement in his mosque. Aisha (his wife) said: "The prophet used to retire the last ten days of Ramadan and continued this custom to the end of his life".

The best-rewarded I'tikaf is that performed in one of three mosques, namely at the holy mosques in Mecca and Medina and the Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

11.11 Laylat Al-Qadr
[The Night of Power]

Laylat Al-Qadr (The Night of Power) is one of the nights of Ramadan during which the Quran was first revealed to Muhammad. That credited it with great blessings unmatched by the blessings of one thousand months.

Allah Almighty says: "The night of Power is better than a thousand months. There in descend the angels and the Spirit by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees. All is peace till the break of dawn."(3) (Surat Al-Qadr, verse 1-5)

There is no common consensus on the night of power; it has been variously fixed as the12 th 23rd and 25th of Ramadan. Ibn Omar related a hadith in which the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said: "Whosoever seeks the night, let him seek it on the 27th."

It is meritorious during the nights when the Night of Power is sought to spend the time in prayer, Quranic recitations, and asking Allah for forgiveness. The Prophet said:" He who spends the Night of Power in prayer, in full faith, shall have his previous sins forgiven." The reward of devotion during this night is better than the reward to be expected for devotion in one thousand months which do not include this night.

The great merit of this night is expounded in a sura (chapter) of the Quran carrying the same name. Allah said: " We have revealed it (The Quran) during the Night of Power. And what will convey to you the meaning of the Night of Power."

11.12 Notes

1-The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said: "Islam is built on five pillars, the Shehada (declaration of faith) that there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is the messenger of Allah, Salat (prayers),Zakat (alms dues), Sawm(fasting) of Ramadan and Hajj (pilgrimage)

(٢)سورة البقرة آية ١٨٤

"أَيَّاماً مَّعْدُودَات فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضاً أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَــــهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْراً فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ "

(٣) سورة القدر الآيات من ١ :٥

"إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ القَدْرِ (١) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ القَدْرِ (٢) لَيْلَةُ القَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَــهْرٍ (٣) تَنَزَّلُ المَلائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِم مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (٤) سَلامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الفَجْرِ "

Chapter Twelve

Al-Hajj and Umra
Pilgrimage and Lesser Pilgrimage

12.1 Definition

Pilgrimage literally means to set out towards a definite object, but eventually the term obtained some religious conotations. Gradually it came to mean a long journey to a distant sacred place as an act of devotion. In the 14th century Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400), the well-known English poet, wrote a collection of tales: The Canterbury Tales in which a group of pilgrims relate some tales and their life-stories– as a means of passing time– on their way to pay homage to Canterbury Cathedral in England. John Bunyan (1628-1688), an English preacher and novelist wrote a novel: The Pilgrims' Progress in which he followed the steps of Chaucer. In Islam, Hajj means undertaking a journey to Mecca, the most sacred place on earth for Muslims. Al-Hajj is the fifth and last of the five pillars of Islam. It is one of the most sublime deeds in Islam as it removes one's previous sins, if it is performed as Allah ordained. The Prophet (A.p.p.h) is narrated by Bukhari and Muslim to have said: "He, who performs Hajj for Allah's pleasure and avoids all lewedness and sins, will return after Hajj free from all sins as he was the day his mother gave him birth".

12.2 Pre-Conditions for Pilgrimage

Al-Hajj is incumbent upon all Muslims on certain conditions. The Quran says: "Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allah, those who are able to make the journey". This means that the Muslim who performs Hajj should conform to the following conditions: he should be:

1- Adult (reached the age of puberty)

2- Sane 3-Free

4-Physically fit to put up with the hardships of the long journey to Mecca and to perform all the duties

thereupon required in strenuous conditions due to bad weather, over-crowding, exhaustions and psychological stress. And

5-Possess the financial means to cover all the expenses of the journey after paying all his debts, leaving enough money to sustain his family during his absence.

Women are not required to perform Hajj if they do not have a "muhrim" (a husband or an adult who is sane, male with whom a woman is forbidden to get married) to accompany them on the journey. However, if a woman is advanced in years, she may perform Hajj in the company of another woman, if the latter is a trustworthy one accompanied by her own "muhrim".

Al-Hajj was prescribed in the sixth year after "Hijra" (The immigration of the Prophet and his companions from Mecca to Medina) in response to the call of Allah: "And proclaim the pilgrimage among men; They will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on any animal, lean (on account of the exhaustion of the journey) from distant and deep valleys. That they may witness benefits (provided) for them. And celebrate the name of Allah, through days appointed over the cattle which He has provided for them. Then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed ones in want." (Chapter "Al-Hajj" 22,verses 27,28)[1].

Prophet Muhammad (A.p.p.h.) was keen on teaching the Muslims how to perform the ceremonies of Al-Hajj by repeating them during his lifetime. He used to hold meetings with his companions to explain to them the main steps to be taken by the pilgrim in the process of his pilgrimage. Those meetings were followed by questions concerning the minutest details of Al-Hajj. It

is related that he tended to facilitate the required ceremonies of Al-Hajj as much as he could emphasising that of all the ceremonies prescribed, being present at any time at Arafat on the nineth day of Dhul-Hijja , is the core of Hajj without which Hajj would be invalid. However, it is recommended to perform all the prescribed ceremonies, including spending the whole of the nineth day of Dhul-Hijja at Arafat, celebrating the name of Allah, reciting supplication, and asking Allah's forgiveness in earnest.

Nevertheless, the Prophet, being the most merciful of all humankind and most considerate of their problems, made another concession. He said: "He who witnesses this prayer of ours-the dawn prayer of the Day of Sacrifice-and remains with us till we have made our sacrifices, and has halted previously at Mount Arafat either by day or night, has completed his pilrimage."

This means that those who are delayed under pressure of circumstances from halting at Mount Arafat before sunset, are all allowed to do this after sunset, and even till the dawn of the Day of Sacrifice, the 10th of Dhul-Hijja.

Hajj is obligatory only once during a Muslim's lifetime, unless he vows to perform extra Hajj in which case, he must fulfil his vow. A Muslim may perform Hajj on behalf of one of his dead or disabled relatives, but he should do his own Hajj first .A Muslim should hasten to perform Hajj once he meets the above-mentioned conditions. The Prophet said: "He who intends to set out on a pilgrimage must hasten; he may fall sick, lose his means of conveyance, or be faced with poverty."

However, if a Muslim is incapacitated by old age or incurable chronic disease, he may choose some adult person to perform the pilgrimage on his behalf, while providing him with the money necessary.

12.3 Al-Umra(Lesser Pilgrimage)

The literal meaning of Umra is a visit. In Islamic conotations, it means visiting the Holy Mosque in Mecca and performing the ceremonies explained below.

According to Muslim scholars, Lesser pilgrimage is desirable, but not compulsory, quoting Abu Hurayra, who reported that the prophet said: "Pilgrimage is a duty, but the Lesser pilgrimage is optional."

Lesser pilgrimage may be performed at any time, on any day all the year round, whereas pilgrimage is performed once per year on the nineth of Dhul-Hijja in accordance with the rules and in the order subsequently stated.

The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) himself performed "Umra" once in Shawwal and another time in Dhul-Qada,though he declared that "Umra" in Ramadan (the month of fasting) is equal to the Hajj in gaining Allah's blessing-without meaning, of course, that it would replace it.

The ceremonies of the "Pilgrimage" exceed these of "Umra" while the "Ihram" for the Lesser pilgrimage ends with the jogging between Safa and Marwa, and having the head shaved or the hair cut, "Ihram" for the pilgrimage ceases only after halting at Mount Arafat, and performing all the ceremonies of the 10th of Dhul-hijja.

12.4 Types of Hajj

There are three types of Hajj: "Mufrid Hajj" (Isolated Hajj, i.e. without "Umra"), "Muqrin Hajj"(Hajj coupled with "Umra") and "Tamatu Hajj" ("Umra" followed by "Tahalul",[2] then Hajj).

However, before we explain in details the three types of Hajj, it is indispensible to define some terms which we will use in due course.

12.5-Ihram, means entering into a state of spiritual and physical consecration. Ihram implies, literally, prohibition, and entails abstention from things and practices that are allowed before entering into the state of Ihram. Ihram is done before performing Hajj or Umra and implies an intention to do so. At certain places outside Mecca,(Known as "Mawaqit" explained below)the pilgrim makes his intention to perform Umra or one of the three types of Hajj, then he cuts his nails, grooms his hair, shaves his armbits and pubic hair. Then, it is recommended for a man to have a complete bath followed by ablution. However, woman is not required to take complete bath unless she is in the state of confinement after childbirth or in her menstruation period. According to Ibn Abbas women in such state are allowed to perform all rites of Hajj with the only exception of circumambulating the "Ka'ba".

After washing his body and performing ablution, the pilgrim foresakes his sewn clothes and puts on the Hajj garb, that consists of two sheets of cloth. One of them is wrapped around the upper part of the body, leaving the right arm and shoulder bare. The other is folded round the loins. The head is left uncovered though the aged and

infirm are permitted to fold something around their heads in return for alms to be given to the poor. Unsewn leather or rubber slippers or sandals are used. As regards women, they are traditionally clad in long garments reaching from head to foot and revealing only the face and hands.

The pilgrim, then, scents himself, prays two prostrations (rak'a) and leaves for Mecca. While in state of Ihram, the Muslim neither shaves nor trims his hair, nor cuts his nails, nor washes his body, apart from the partial ablution before praying. Neither is he allowed any licentiousness of speech, sexual intercourse, acts of wickedness or vice, quarrels or acts of violence.

The "Muhrim"(a person in a state of Ihram) abstains from killing anything that has life, even insects or birds unless they are harmful or dangerous. He also abstains from cutting or plucking any plant, leaf or flower. Though women are allowed to wear the garments they wish, they are not allowed to put on gloves or a face veil, or to use sweet-scented perfumes, or wear dresses wholly or partially dyed with saffron. If the pilgrim does any of these forbidden acts by mistake or forgetfulness, while in state of Ihram, he has to atone for that by offering a sacrifice; the indigent can fast three days in atonement.

12.6 Talbiya

Before starting his journey to Mecca, a pilgrim may stipulate a condition upon Allah, just in case he is held back from performing Hajj or Urma, for one reason or another, such as fear, sickness or the like, saying: "O, Allah! I may terminate my Ihram in such a place and time in which you withhold me".[3] After declaration of his

intention, The pilgrim recites the "Talbiya"(response to the call of Allah). In case of Umra he says: "Labbaiykal Allahuma bi Umrah" which means O,Allah! here I am responding to You by performing Umra". In case of Hajj, he says "Labbaiykal Allahuma bi Hajj"which means "O, Allah, I am responding to You in performing Hajj (Mufrid,or Moqrin, or Tamatu)"

The above Talbiya is to be recited once upon entering into the state of Ihram, whereas the following must be recited repeatedly until a pilgrim reaches the Holy Mosque :

"لبيك اللهم لبيك،لبيك لا شريك لك لبيك ،إن الحمد والنعمة لك والملك ،لا شريك لك "

"Labbaika Allahuma Labbaika, Labbaika La Shareeka Laka Labbaika, inna al-hamda wan- ni'mata Laka wal-mulk, La Shareeka Laka." Which means: "Here I am, O, Allah, here I come. There is no associate with You. Here I am, surely, all praise and graces are yours, and so is the dominion! There is no associate with You." The Messenger of Allah (A.p.p.h.) recited this "Talbiye" loudly and repeatedly till he entered the Holy Mosque and touched the "Black Stone".

12.7 Mawaqit

The literal meaning of the word "mawaqit" is times; however, in the Islamic context it signifies the places from where the actual rites of pilgrimage begin. These refer to four places outside Mecca at which Muslims assemble before entering into the state of Ihram. The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) fixed these places to the South, East and North of Mecca. Any one intending to perform Hajj or Umra

must not pass these marked points without Ihram. These places are:

a-Dhul-Hulayfa, a place to the North of Mecca, at a distance of 450 Kilometres. It is to be used by those coming from Medina and those to the North of it.
b-Al-Juhfa, a place to the North-West of Mecca; it is a "Miqat" allotted to the pilgrims of Egypt, Turkey, the Balkan countries, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and those coming from Europe and the Americas.
c-Yalamlam, a place to the South of Mecca designated for the people of Yemen and those coming from countries to the South of Yemen.
d-Qarn-al-Manazil ,a place to the East of Mecca allotted to the people of Nejd, Riyadh, and those coming from the East.

Any person who comes to Mecca by plane or ship, should perform "Ihram" when the carrying vehicle reaches to a point parallel to one of these "Mawaqit". Those coming by plane may get into the state of "Ihram" immediately before they get on board of the plane.

People whose dwelling places lie between these "Mawaqit" and Mecca have to assume "Ihram" from where they start their sacred journey. As for Meccans, they assume "Ihram" from their homes. However, for Umra Meccans assume "Ihram" beyond the Holy Mosque.

12.8 Tawaf

The literal meaning of "Tawaf" is going round. In the Islamic context, it means circumambulating the "Ka'ba".

The pilgrim may perform "Tawaf" three times: (a) Tawaf Al-Qudom (circumambulation of Arrival). This is performed immediately on entering the Holy Mosque, the pilgrim heads towards the"Ka'ba", touches or kisses the "Black Stone" (if possible), then he starts Tawaf .If his entrance co-incides with the time for a congregational prayer, he prays first, then he starts his "Tawaf".

(b) Tawaf Al-Ifada (circumamulation of having performed a duty). This tawaf is to be performed on the 10th day of Dhul-Hijja after offering the sacrifice. Nevertheless, it is permissible to do it later.

(c) Tawaf Al-Weda'ee (Farewell Tawaf). This is to be done before leaving Mecca for good. If a woman is in a state of menstruation, she performs all the rituals of Hajj except circumambulation which she postpones until she is purified. Aged and weak pilgrims can perform circumambulation while carried on a stretcher.

5-Ka'ba: Sacred building at the centre of the Holy Mosque. Muslims regard it as the Holy of the Holies containing the Black Stone.

12.9 Safa, Marwa, Sa'ee

As-Safa and Al-Marwa are two eminent hills close to Zamzam well; they are the two slightly high hills between which Hajar, the mother of Isma'el, ran in search for a drink of water to satisfy the thirst of her starving baby. After making her seventh trip running between Safa and Marwa Hajar, while supplicating to Allah to save their lives, saw water gushing out from a nearby point forming a well, now known as Zamzam well. The three sites: Safa,

Marwa and Zamzam, are now parts of the Holy Mosque and lie within its borders.

The pilgrim walks up and down between Safa and Marwa seven times in commemoration of the wandering of Hajar over the same ground. This trip is termed Sa'ee. Literally the word Sa'ee in Arabic means to exert an effort with an end in view. But, in the Islamic context the word has come to mean walking between As-Safaa' and Al-Marwa. However, between two marked points in course of this trip (Sa'ee) the male pilgrim has to jog. Those who cannot perform this Sa'ee can make use of wheel-chairs pushed by their relatives or by paid pushers. The wheel-chairs are available free at the Holy Mosque.

12.10 Eid Al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice). This falls on the 10th of Dhul-Hijja. On that day, Muslims all over the world slaughter a sheep in commemoration of Abraham's escape goat. The pilgrim makes his sacrificial offering after throwing the pebbles at "Jamrat al-Aqaba". If the pilgrim does not possess the money to buy a sheep, he may fast three days while still in a state of "Ihram" and seven days when he returns home.

12.11-Wakfit Arrafat (Halting at Mount Arafat).

Pilgrims set towards Mount Arafat in the morning of the 9th of Dhul-Hijja. There, they stay till sunset, perform the noon and after-noon prayers together (Kasr) preferably at Masgid (Mosque) Namera or close to it. During their stay at Arafat, the pilgrims lift up their hands in prayer and thanksgiving repeating the Prophet's supplication: "There is no god but Allah. He has no partner. His are authority and praise. Good emanates from Him, and he has power over all things."

(لا إله إلا الله لا شريك له ,له الملك وله الحمد)

The staying at Arafat is an essential part of the pilgrimage. The one who misses it has not performed Hajj in accordance with the Prophet's saying: "There is no pilgrimage without Arafat"

12.12 Muzdalapha: A place between "Arafat" and "Mena". After sunset, the pilgrims move to Muzdalapha where they pray Maghrib (sunset prayer) and Isha (night prayer), collect the pebbles with which to stone the emblems of Satan. At Muzdalapha, the Muslims spend the night till the dawn of the following day, the "Day of Sacrifice"

12.13 Jamrat al-Aqaba: (An emblem representing Satan).The pilgrim throws seven pebbles at this emblem, one after the other, repeating loudly with each thrown pebble: "Labbayka! Labbayka! Allaho Akbar!".After completing the stoning,he stops calling out, and says: "May Allah bless the pilgrimage and forgive our sins".

12.14 Steps to be followed by the pilgrims in the process of performing Hajj or Umra

1-Make the intention to perform Hajj or Umra at an ample time before the due date if you possess the conditions that qualify you to do so.
2-Pay off all your debts, write your will, allot the necessary money for the journey and the sum to sustain your family during your absence. A female pilgrim has to accompany a "muhrim" unless she is advanced in years. Old women may be accompanied by other trustworthy women if the latter have "muhrims".

3-Embark towards Mecca and halt at one of the four Mawaqit. There, assume "Ihram", pray two prostrations (rakaa), declare your intention to perform one of the three types of Hajj(Mufrid, Moqrin or Tamattu) or to perform Umra, and resume your journey heading for the Holy Mosque in Mecca while reciting "Talbeya" loudly.

4-Enter the Holy Mosque, through one of the gates preferably As-salam gate saying: "In the name of Allah,prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, O, Allah, open for me the gates of your mercy.

(بسم الله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله , اللهم افتح لنا أبواب رحمتك)

{Bismillah,wasalat wa salam Ala Rasoolullah, Allahuma eftah lena Abwab rahmatic}

5-When you see Al-ka'ba raise your hands and say: "O Allah ! You are peace, and peace emanates from You! O, Allah! Greet us with peace."

(اللهم أنت السلام, ومنك السلام, فأحينا ربنا بالسلام)

[Allahuma Anta as-salam, wa minka as-salam,fahayena bel-salam.]

6-Once you are in the Holy Mosque, head for the ka'ba and kiss or touch the Black Stone (if possible). From there, start "tawaf alqodum"(Arrival circumambulation), unless it is time for a congregational prayer. In that case, pray first then start the "tawaf" seven times, saying every time you come parallel to the Black Stone:"In the name of Allah, Allah is omnipotent"(بسم الله, الله أكبر)**(Bismillah, Allahu Akbar) while pointing to it. In the course of the circulation, recite: "Allah our Rabb! Grant us a reward in this worlds and a reward in the Hereafter, and protect us from the torment of Hell fire.**(اللهم أتنا في الدنيا حسنة وفى الأخرة حسنة وقنا عذاب النار)

[Allahuma Rabana, aatena fi eddonia hasana wa fil Akhera hasana wa qena azab al-nar]

7-Once the seventh round of "tawaf" is terminated, perform two prostrations (raka'a) behind "Maqam Ibrahim" (the Tomb of Abraham), if possible, or anywhere in the Holy Mosque. Recite in the first raka'a the Opening of the Quran (Al-Fatiha) and the Chapter "The Disbelievers" (Surat: "Al-Kaferon").In the second raka'a, recite Al-Faitha and the Chapter "Faithfulness"(Surat: "Al-Ikhlas").

8- After prayer, drink as much as you can from Zamzam water, then proceed to the little hillocks of As-Safa, and on the way there recite the following verses from the Quran: "Verily As-Safa, and Al Marwa are among the rites of Allah, so there is no sin upon him who performs Hajj or Umra to walk back and forth between them. And whoever does good voluntarily then verily Allah is Appreciative and All-knowing" (Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 158).

(إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِ اعْتَمَرَ فَلاَ جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْراً فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ) (سورة البقرة–الآية ١٥٨)

[Ena-As Safa wal Marwa men sha'er Allah,faman hajj aw a'itamar fla jonaha alieh an yattawef behoma, wa man tata'w'a khaira fa in Allaha Shaker Aleem].Then say:"I start where Allah started"

[Abda bema bada'a Allahu behe](أبدأ بما بدأ الله به)

9- When you are on top of As-Safa, face Kaba'a and raise your hands supplicating: "There is no god but Allah; He has no associate; His are the dominion and praise; He is almighty; there is no god except Allah alone; He has no partner. He fulfilled His promise and enabled His slave to achieve victory while defeating all the clans, all alone(لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ,له الملك وله الحمد وهو على كل شيء قدير) .

while walking down between

the two hills, you may supplicate Allah to respond to your wishes, protect you from dangers and donate you health, wealth and benefaction.

10-After the seven trips of Sa'ee are completed, starting from As-Safa and ending on Al-Marwa, the "Muhrim" intent on Hajj alone (Mufrid or Hajj and Umra combined (Muqrin)remains in his state of consecration(Ihram).

But, if he is "Mutamatti", i.e. intending Umra followed by Hajj, or if he is performing Umra only, he may reliquish his Ihram, now that the Umra is ended. He can now have his head shaved or his hair cut. As for women, they need only shorten their hair.

The "Mutamatti" must make an offering in compliance with the Quran: "If any one wishes to continue the Umra into the Hajj, he must make an offering, such as he can afford."(4) (Surat Al-Bakarah, verse 196) This offering ranges from a sheep, to a cow, up to a camel.

11-<u>Al-Tarweya Day</u> (The Day of Watering).

Al-Tarweya Day falls on the 8th of Dhul-Hijja; it is called the Day of Watering because on this day the pilgrims used to provide themselves with water for the days which follow. Nowadays, there is no need for this as water is made available in Mena and Arafat. On this day, the "Mutamatti"reassumes Ihram from wherever he happens to be saying: " Here I am responding to you, O, Allah, to perform Hajj"(لبيك اللهم بحج)

[Labbayka Allahuma bi Hajj], and joins the other pilgrims in leaving Mecca for Mena which they may reach at noon. They perform their Noon, After-Noon, Sunset and Isha prayers and spend the night at Mena.

12-The next day, the 9th of Dhul-Hijja, perform your morning prayers, wait for sunrise, then leave for Mount Arafat, while raising your voices in unison:
"Labbayka Allahuma Labbayka, Allahu Akbar" (لبيك اللهم لبيك ,الله أكـــبر)

Spend the time at Arafat from the time you arrive there till sunset. Perform the Noon and the After-Noon prayers jointly at Namera Mosque "qasr", i.e. shortened to two raka'a each. Until the time of performing Maghrib (sunset) prayers, you should beg Allah in earnest to forgive your sins and guide you to the straight path, the path of those whom Allah favoured. Supplicate Allah, persistently, humbly and lowly with your palms facing upwards, repeating the Prophet's words: " There is no god but Allah. He has no partner. His are authority and praise. Good emanates from Him, and He has power over all things."

Standing at Mount Arafat on the 9 th of Dhul-Hijja, even for a few seconds, is the most essential pillar of the pilgrim .Those who are delayed under the pressure of circumstances from halting at Mount Arafat before sunset, they are allowed to do this after sunset, and even till the dawn of the "Feast of Sacrifice". This is done in accordance with the Prophet's saying: "He who witnesses this prayer of ours- the dawn prayer of the Feast of Sacrifice- and remains with us till we have made our sacrifices, and has halted previously at Mount Arafat either by day or night, has completed his Hajj."

13-Afer sunset at Mount Arafat, hasten to Muzdalapha, perform the Maghrib (sunset) and Isha(evening)prayers there. The Isha prayer is shortened into two raka'a.

Collect the pebbles and spend the night praying, supplicating and begging Allah to forgive your sins. Pray to Allah to help you realize all your dreams and to protect you from the torments of Hellfire in the Hereafter.

Spending the night at Muzdalapha is regarded as an obligation by some Muslim scholars, while others consider it only a "sunna"(the practice of the Prophet), i.e. it is optional. As for women and the weak, They are exempted by the Prophet from spending this night at Muzdalapha.

14-Having spent the night at Muzdalapha, move towards Mena, after performing the Dawn prayers. On the way to Mena you come across "Jamrat al- Aqaba", halt there and throw seven pebbles at the pole representing Satan. The stones should be thrown one after the other crying out with each pebble: "Labbayka Allahuma Labbayka!Allahu Akbar"

(لبيك اللهم لبيك ,الله أكبر).

After throwing the seven stones, pray to Allah saying "May Allah bless the pilgrimage and forgive our sins" Hajj mabrour wa thamb(اللهم اجعله حجاً مبروراً وذنباً مغفوراً)

maghfour) inshall Allah).This stoning may be done any time during the
Day of Sacrifice.

15-The Mutamatti Hajj, having stoned Jamrat Al-Aqaba, proceeds to Mena to make his sacrificial offering. He has to sacrifice a sheep, or he may share with seven other pilgrims in slaughtering a cow or a camel. The pilgrim may take one quarter of his sacrifice to be eaten by his household, the rest is to be distributed among the needy.

16-Having completed the afore-mentioned rites, terminate your Ihram, enjoy all that was prohibited during Ihram except sexual intercourse. However, this termination of Ihram is called "preliminary termination" and can be done even before slaughtering your sacrifice.

17-It is customary to have the head shaved, or the hair cut on the 10th of Dhul-Hijja, the Eid of Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) For the pilgrim, shaving is preferable to hair-cutting as was stated by the Prophet.

18-According to the practice of the Prophet, after making your sacrificial offering, go to Mecca, the Holy Mosque to perform "Tawaf Al-Ifada". The sequence of these rites, stoning, offering the sacrifice, shaving and performing Tawaf-Al-Ifada is not obligatory, i.e. The sequence can be changed according to the pilgrim's wish as long as they are all performed on the 10th of Dhul-Hijja.

Having performed these rites, the Mufrid or Muqrin pilgrim has right to resume his normal life, including having sex with his wife. Tawaf Al-Ifada may be delayed till the 11th or the 12th of Dhul-Hijja for reasons of suitability or easiness, in that case the resumption of normal life can be delayed as well.

The Motamatti Hajj has to perform a second sa'ee between Safa and Marwa; this is regarded as Al-Hajj Sa'ee, The first being Al-Umra Sa'ee.The Mufrid and Muqrin pilgrims are exempted from the second Sa'ee. The Mutamatti Hajj can resume his normal life only after the second Sa'ee.

19-Return to Mena to spend the rest of the Eid days and nights, that is the 11th the 12th and the 13th of Dhul-Hijja. During this period, perform the daily prayers, each at its due time, shortening the four-raka'a prayer to two (Dthur, Asr and Isha).

Casting the pebbles should take place in the afternoon on these days. On the 11th, seven pebbles should be cast at the first Jamra which is located close to Masgid Al-Kheef, in the same manner you did while casting Jamrat Al-Aqaba.

Having cast the pebbles, step forward leaving the first Jamra on the left side while facing "Qiblah" (The direction of Ka'aba) and supplicate Allah for a long time. Then, move on to cast the second Jamra or the middle post with another seven pebbles, then step aside to keep it on your right, and supplicate for a period shorter than the first. After casting the third Jamra, no supplication is required.

20-If you wish to leave early, you may leave Mena on the 11th of Dhul-Hijja after casting the three posts before sunset. If you prefer to stay behind the 13 th which is better, you may delay the casting of the posts until that day. It is recommended to cast the posts in the afternoon, but if it is too crowded, you may cast them during the night. Women and weak Pilgrims may delegate others to cast pebbles on their behalf. The deputy should cast his pebbles first, then those for others.

21-If you leave for Medina, or leave for home without entering Mecca. there is no need for Tawaf Al-Weda'a (Farewell Circumambulation). However, if you enter Mecca, tawaf Al-Weda'a is a must. Tawaf Al-Ifada may be

delayed until the 13th_of Dhul-Hijja, the time of leaving Mecca for good .In that case one tawaf would suffice for Tawaf Al-Ifada and Tawaf Al-Weda'a this should be the last thing to be done before leaving Mecca; no buying or selling or visiting should be done after that Tawaf.

22-Reminders (a) If a "muhrim" is forced to do any of the acts prohibited due to "Ihram", the "muhrim" has to fast three days, or offer a sacrifice to the poor, or feed six separate poor people.

(b)A pilgrim must guard his or her tongue from telling lies, backbiting, slandering, or arguing. One must, also, choose the good company, and make sure that the funds he or she brought along to cover the expenses of the journey are earned through lawful means.

(c)It is permissible for the "muhrim" to have a bath or a shower, or to put on cleaner garments. Use only unscented soap.

(d)Tawaf Al-Weda'a is a must for those who leave for home from Mecca, and it should be the last thing they do before leaving Mecca for good.

23-It is highly recommended to visit the Mosque of the Prophet, after or before performing Hajj. The Prophet (A.p.p.h.) said: "Visit should be paid to three mosques: namely the Holy Mosque in Mecca, his own in Medina and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem."

12.15 Notes

(١) سورة الحج آية ٢٧ – ٢٨

"وَأَذِّن فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالاً وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِن كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ (٢٧) لِيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَى مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الأَنْعَامِ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ "

2-"Tahalul" is the opposite of "Ihram". In case of "Tahalul" the Pilgrim is free to perform all the practices he avoids during "Ihram"

(٣) (اللهم محلي حيث حبستني)

(٤)سورة البقرة آية ١٩٦

"فَإِذَا أَمِنتُمْ فَمَن تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِن الْهَدْيِ "

Chapter Thirteen

Controversial Issues

13.1 The Issue of Islam and the West

In the aftermath of World War II, many western thinkers directed most of their. Writings towards investigating some persistent ideological and religious issues and their influence on the fighting camps and or on the followers of the ensuing blocks: the Eastern and the Western.

Some of these writings dealt with issue of Islam and the Islamic nations. Islam being a religion and a social system at the same time has been closely connected with the general and growing interest in political and social affairs.

When Western thinkers handle the religion of Islam, the value of their writings correspond with their motivations and intentions more than they do with their awareness and knowledge. They belong to different parties adopting different attitudes, ethics and ideologies, and these imperatively affect the weight of their writings and their value, negatively or positively.

Some of these writers are missionaries who deviate from the truth either voluntarily or involuntarily. Being missionaries they earn their living from what they write in accordance with the requirements of their churches. Pleasing their employers takes the first priority, truth the second.

Some other writers serve the policies of their states; they propagate the ideologies and attitudes adopted by the state regardless of their own views. These views are coloured by the attitudes taken by their states towards Islam. They hardly carry any weight.

Nevertheless, there are the Western thinkers whose main goal is the Truth, unbiased and uncoloured. They seek truth for truth's sake regardless of social, political or religious prejudices. Some of these, however, do not posses the full truth due to language and cultural barriers. They are very similar to the English Scholars who write about Arabic literature whereas they are not aware of the secrets of the language as do its native speakers. Their writings though sincere are fallible.

Some Western thinkers plaud Islam as much as it provides them with enough material to support their rebellion against the authority of the church or the state in their countries. Very few of these recognize the real value of Islam and its main advantage over other religions, nonetheless they adopt neither Islam nor any other religion.

It is incumbent upon us— as Muslims, to know what the others say about Islam and to discuss their claims and attitudes with the sole purpose of highlighting the truth.

13.2 Woman in Islam

Many feminists criticise Islam severely on the ground that it places man on a level one step higher than woman. Islam places woman on par with man, with regard to all human rights, but Islam holds man responsible for protecting her physically and supporting her financially. In this sense only, man occupies a position higher than that of woman. Allah Almighty says

And they (women) have rights like (the obligations) they are under with beneficence and men have a degree

above them, and Allah is Ever-Mighty, Ever-Wise (Al Baqara: 228)

Again Allah Almighty says:

> And do not covet that whereby Allah has graced some of you over the others. To the men is an assignment from what they have appropriated and to the women is an assignment from what they have appropriated. And ask Allah of His Grace. Surely Allah has been Ever-Knowing of everything. (An-Nisa: 32)

This means that men appropriate certain qualities which distinguish them from women and do women. Each sex should not covet what the other sex possesses as each sex has the qualities that best suits its very nature and Allah knows better.

The degree which men have over women is justified. Allah Almighty says:

> Men the ever-upright (managers) (of the affairs) of women because of what Allah has graced some of them over the others, and because of what they have expended of their riches. (An-Nisa: 34)

This grace which Allah has given to men over women is due to the fact that men manage women's affairs and spend on them. It is the right of the protector towards the protected even if the latter–in this case woman–possesses enough money to support herself.

When the Quran prefers man to woman, it is stating a fact that history has proven from the early days of Adam to

the present day. Men are different from women with regard to their physical and psychological abilities and with regard to the jobs each is qualified to perform. Those who claim that woman can perform all the activities done by man and that she was deprived from performing them due to man's authority and despotism, contradict themselves. The very claim that men controlled and persecuted them indicates that men have been more powerful even if that is limited to physical power. Men have been through different ages and in all countries and nations the masters since the inception of the patriarchal family to the present day.

In the 7th century when Islam came into existence baby-girls were buried alive and prostitution was a common practice; women in Europe were looked down upon and occupied a status similar to that of slaves and so was the case in India where widows were buried alive with their dead husbands or were exposed to absolute humiliation. Islam prohibited burying baby girls and forbade prostitution and regarded it as a shameful sin. However women in the west and the east continued to suffer from the debasing conditions imposed upon them until very recently towards the beginning of the 20th century.

Many of the principles contained in the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 have their roots in the tenets of Islam. Most of these principles stress the rights of women to equal human rights.

Abbas AlAkad, the well-known Arab thinker maintains that in India, according to the rules of Menu woman never enjoyed a right independent of that of her father, before marriage, or of her husband after marriage, or that of her

son after the death of her husband. In case she loses her son also she becomes dependent upon one of her relatives. More important if her husband dies, she is cremated with him in the same crematory. However, if she choses to live after his death, she is relegated to a status of slaves.

In ancient Greece woman was denied all legal rights and had to live in a neglected dwelling place whereas prostitutes, fallen women and concubincs dominated most of the clubs and public places. Wives and mothers were not allowed the company of men nor were they permitted into public places to participate in any common activity. Aristotle believed that the fall of Sparta was due to giving their wives, mothers and free women legal rights, particularly the right of inhenitance.[2] However, the Spartan women enjoyed some freedom denied the other Greek women.

Nevertheless, this freedom of the Spartan woman was a practical necessity rather than an acknowledgement of human rights. Most of the Spartans were knights whose main job was fighting away from their home land. In their absence women had to cater for the necessities of everyday life. This gave them the opportunity to participate in public life and to enjoy a limited form of freedom.

The ancient Roman women were also looked down upon as the Romans believed that the chains of women should never be lifted and their freedom should never be granted in accordance with the famous saying of Cano: nunguam exvitur Servitus muliebris The Roman woman was emancipated only when slavery was prohibited due to several rebellions in Rome and everywhere.

The Egyptian civilization was unique among ancient civilizations in dignifying woman and, investing her with legal rights similar to that of men. She enjoyed the rights of possession, inheritance and managing the affairs of her family during the absence of her supporter. These rights were respected as long as the ancient dynasties were in control and imposed social stability. Nevertheless these dynasties disappeared long before the emergence of Islam. With the fall of the ancient Egyptian dynasties woman was exposed to the rules of the invadors be they Persian or Greek.

In the middle Ages some theologians were occupied with the issue of the nature of woman. They claimed that woman was a sinning body without soul; thus she cannot be saved. However, they regarded Virgin Mary mother of Jesus as the only exception.

In Norway, towards the end of the 19^th^ century, Nora, in Ibsen's A doll's House refused to remain one more night with her husband after eight years of marriage because he failed to recognize her as an equal human being. She reminds him that when they got married nobody asked her opinion. She moved from her father's house to her husband's like a piece of furniture. Since then her husband slighted her views and regarded her as a feather-brain woman never to rely upon or to reckon with. She did not even possess an independent financial identity, that is why she had to look for a man to sign her I.O.U. She could not resort to her husband as she wanted to borrow money behind his back. The alternative was her father, but the latter was on his death-bed, so she had to forge his signature.

The play was warmly welcomed in most of the European cities as it touched upon a very sensitive cord in man and woman relationship. Most of the European women were suffering and Nora was their mouthpiece. The right of choosing one's husband and of possessing independent, recognized financial identity granted by Islam to women in the 7th century was still fought for in Europe towards the end of the 19th century.

In Arabia, in the pre-Islamic era, girls were not only buried alive when still babies, but those who survived that savage destiny were bought and sold and used to pay off debts. Women of nobilities only enjoyed privileges becoming their social status.

The Quran which was revealed in the 7th century established unprecedented legal rights to women not in Arabia only but in the whole world as well. The Quran raised her to a status of dignity from the base one from which she suffered since the dawn of history. In Islam woman is not the accomplice of Satan who seduced Adam to eat of the forbidden tree as was mentioned in , Genesis, Act 3.

In the Quran the story of the forbidden tree is mentioned in three suras (chapters)! Al-Baqara, Al-A'raf and Taha. In these suras it is mentioned that Adam and Eve were beguiled by Satan who persuaded them to eat of the forbidden tree. In none of them is it mentioned that it is Eve who seduced Adam to do that, thus the Quran delivers women of the original sin from which both the Jewish and Christian women suffer. According to Islam, it is not woman alone who sinned, both man and woman Adam and Eve responded to Satan's invitation and disobeyed their

Lord. It is, incumbent for two of them to repent and ask Allah's forgiveness. Woman is not Satan's accomplice neither is she an unclean, soulless body or, an animal beyond salvation.

The Quran enjoins the Muslim to cater for his parents, particularly when they grow old and need his assistance specially his mother who bore him nine months in her womb and suffered the pains of delivery. Allah Almighty says:

"We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents, in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth"

In Judaism a woman inherits but she is forced to marry a man of the same family, to keep the wealth in the family circle. This is a very conditioned right from which woman cannot benefit. In Islam woman whether she inherits or not has the right to choose her husband whether he belongs to the same family or not. More important her wealth remains in her possession to spend it the way she likes before and after marriage. Woman according to Islam has an independent financial identity from birth to death.

Woman, in Islam, has rights equivalent to her commitments. Man being the one responsible for supporting the family is given the leadership for which woman is unqualified. Woman by her very nature is fragile, passionate and suffers physically during menstruation and pregnancy. However, her role in giving birth to children and bringing them up is of equal importance. In Islam marriage is a partnership in which every partner has definite responsibilities but one of them should be the navigator to steer the married life safely. The

couple are equal in rights but have different obligations; their obligations complement rather contradict each other.

Man inherits double what woman inherits and this is fair in the light of the commitments of each.

"Allah (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females". As the males will be responsible for their families by the power of law according to Islamic jurisprudence.

Woman has also the right to practise any type of work that becomes her nature and enjoys the income of that work. " The Quran emphasizes the equality between the two sexes.

> "To men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn"

Thus it can be safely maintained that woman has been granted in the Quran rights unprecedented and unmatched in any legislation however modern that might be.

13.3 Divorce

Man, since the dawn of history, has taken the initiative in his relation to woman, he proposes to the woman he wishes to have and she responds either negatively or positively. It is part of woman's nature to show herself off to the man she desires and waits for his response. Rarely does woman propose, this would be an exception.

As man has the right to ask for a woman's hand, he has also the right to dispense with her. This was the case until

societies began to organize the practice of this right in the light of the dominant religions.

In Judaism, the husband has the unconditioned right of divorcing his wife and has to give her a "bill" of divorce. If she married another man and leaves him because of divorce or for other reason, she has no right to re-marry her first husband even if they wish to do so. Consider Deuteronomy chapter 24.

> **1-When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand and send her out of his house.**
>
> **2-And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.**
>
> **3-And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife.**
>
> **4-Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled.**

This continued to be the common practice until Christianity came into existence. When Jesus was asked about divorce he prohibited it saying.

> **And I say unto you. Whosoever shall put away with his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall**

> marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (Mathew 19:9)

Nevertheless, Europeans and Americans can resort to the court to have one of three forms of divorce. The first is to nullify the marriage contract, the second is a form of separation; the third separates the husband and wife but they remain bound by a legal marriage contract. However, before reaching any form of divorce, the judge and the juries have to be convinced of the impossibility of marital life between the couple. Matters of spending on children, and other financial affairs have to be settled down before passing a final sentence on divorce.

Divorce is permitted in Islam as the last unwelcome resort, when all other doors are closed. It is an unwelcome necessity, a bitter pill, an abomination. The Muslim resorts to it only when all the other means to sustain marital life fail. When a Muslim feels unable to retain his wife for some reason or other, he should not hasten to divorce her, rather he should resort to patience. Allah Almighty advises him:

> And consort with them (women) with beneficence, so in case you hate them then it is possible you may hate something, and Allah sets in it much charity.

He would ask some of their relatives to intercede to resolve the problems they face. If he loses patience and all the efforts to bring them together fail, the Muslim then may divorce his wife a reversible divorce. In four months time if his anger abates and he feels the desire to rejoin his

wife and she overcomes her hatred and wishes for resuming their life, then they may resume their married life. However, if they remain unchanged, man may divorce her the second time. "And when you divorce women and they reach their prescribed time then either retain them in good fellowship or set them free with liberality." (2:231) Again the Quran stresses kindness towards women even if you divorce them. "So when they have reached their prescribed limit, then retain them with kindness or separate them with kindness" (65:2)

This means that a Muslim should not keep his wife for an unlimited time without deciding to retain her or separate from her. In four months time, after pronouncing the first reversible divorce, the husband has to decide either to go back to his wife or to divorce her an irreversible divorce, to set her free. In both cases woman is to be treated with equal kindness and generosity.

Divorce may prove more merciful than forcing wives and husbands to live together despite their will. Both partners will look for side ways to avoid this abominable life. The social consequences of such life may be devastating such as adultery and even murder. Divorce is a bitter pill to be swallowed when everything else fails. Allah Almighty knows what is best for mankind.

13.4 Polygamy

Polygamy, in the sense of having more than one wife at the same time, has been one of the burnin issues. Severe criticism has been directed against Islam for permitting polygamy and allowing man to have up to four wives at the

same time, thus debasing women and slighting their status in society.

It should be made clear that polygamy is allowed in Islam only as an exception. It is succinctly so stated in the Glorious Quran: "And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) one only." (4:3) This is the only verse in the Glorious Quran that speaks of polygamy, and it is evident that it does not enjoin polygamy; it only permits it, and that too is bound by certain conditions. First, polygamy is allowed only when there are orphans to be cared for by an uncle or a relative, that relative may marry the mother of these orphans if he feels that he cannot do them justice unless he is bound by marriage to their mother. Such marriage would enable him to care for the orphans and have free access to them without fearing social slander. This is an acceptable social condition that caters for the welfare of the orphans, the dignity of women than to the physical needs of man. Another condition is imposed in the same verse, which limits this marriage to the man who feels that he can do justice to his wives. He should provide them with similar dwelling places, similar food and clothing and give them the same physical attention. If he feels unable to do so, he should be satisfied with one wife.

The value of this conditioned permission to polygamy becomes evident especially in times of war; men die in the battlefields and women are left behind with their children to feed and care for. Many of these may not possess the qualifications for the humblest job. The last resort for such women would be prostitution with all its physical, social,

moral and psychological negative consequences. When Islam permits polygamy it preserves woman's dignity and humanity and cares for the orphans' social moral and economic wellbeing. The same thing applies when the number of females exceeds that of males in one of the societies. This would lead to moral depravity which threatens the very essence of civilization.

It may be argued that the modern state can make other arrangements for the maintenance of the windows and orphans. That may be true but the state cannot provide them with a home –life; in Islam home –life is the real source whence all good qualities of love and affection spring, which are the greatest asset of social life and civilization. Even if it be half a home that the woman and children find in a polygamous family, it is better than having no home at all.

Monogamy is without doubt the right form of life under normal conditions, but when abnormal conditions are brought about by the excess of females over males, monogamy fails, and it is only through a limited form of polygamy that this difficulty is faced.

It may be further argued that polygamy which has been instituted by Islam as an exception and a remedy has been largely abused by sensual people. That is true, but there are people in every society who abuse any institution, however necessary that may be to the healthful growth of human society. In countries, where polygamy is not allowed, the sensuality of man has invented a hundred other ways of giving vent to his carnal desires and these comsprise a far greater threat to the security and welfare of society than the abuse of polygamy.

Rather than debasing women or belittling their status in society as some feminists claim, Islam recognizes the position of women to be equal to that of man. The Glorious Quran maintains, Allah Almighty says "And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a believer-these shall enter the Garden" (4:124)

From a material point of view, woman is recognized as on par with man. She can earn money and own property just as man can do and therefore she may, if she feels the need, follow any profession: "Men shall have the benefit of what they earn women shall have the benefit of what they earn." (4:32) Woman, in Islam, has an independent economic identity, a status for which European woman fought until the beginning of the twentieth century. Woman, in Islam, does not lose her independent economic identity or any of her rights when she marries. Thus all the rights of women are preserved and her dignity is stressed as an equal human being.

Polygamy is, in some cases, a practical solution and a better alternative. When a man's wife suffers from a chronic disease and fails to respond to her husband's physical needs, Islam offers two alternatives, divorce or polygamy. Many wives would commend the second alternative as it saves them the humiliation of starving particularly if they have no jobs to support themselves. The same thing applies when it is proven that the wife is sterile and the husband longs to be a father. According to Islam he can divorce his wife or take to himself another who can bear him children. The second alternative may prove most convenient to the sterile wife.

The question may be raised, what if the husband is sterile or suffers from a chronic incurable disease, would the wife entertain the same right and have a second husband? The answer is no, for practical reasons. Most of the societies all over the world are patriarchal where the father assumes the leading role. If the mother assumes the role of the rooster, this would be a backward step to the savage matriarchal age. This system is still dominant in some very few backward tribes in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Besides the confusion that would prevail in the household as a result of having more than one husband, there would emerge the problem of relating the children to the father, who can decide who is the real father of the child if there are more than one husband? Problems of inheritance and moral ones would emerge in due time. Islam forbids a woman from having more than one husband at the same time. However, if the husband is sterile or suffers from a chronic disease that prevents them from consummating a reasonable sexual life, the wife has the right to ask for divorce and gets it according to the Islamic jurisprudence.

In societies where women outnumber men, there would be two alternatives i.e. polygamy or prostitution. It is natural for every human being to seek a mate for various psychological, social, economic and sexual reasons. If that mate is not available due to phenomenal reasons such as females outnumber males, monogamy would not solve the difficulty. The supernumerary women would seek physical satisfaction in adultery and economic support in prostitution. If society permits polygamy, woman would enjoy a dignified life where her physical and economic needs are satisfied without losing self-respect or social acceptance. Her children would enjoy the protection and

the care of a father. It may be argued that in such case she would have a half husband, but that is better than having no husband, no protection and no ceiling over her head.

Mohammad, the prophet of Islam has been exposed to the severest criticism possible for having nine wives. Critics have raised suspicion about the reasons why the prophet had so many wives implying that he was a licentious man controlled by his sexual desires. As a matter of fact, Mohammad (A.p.p.h.) was the farthest man from the amenities of life.

The first point to be made in this connection is that pre-Islamic Arabia was a polygamous society, where man could marry as many wives as he could afford. Some of the Muslim converts such as Ghayan Al-Thaqafi and Al-Harith Ibn Qays had many wives before Islam; the former had ten and the latter eight. After it was decreed that a man should not have more than four wives, they had to chose four and divorce the rest. Mohammad (A.p.p.h.) married all his wives in accordance with the tradition of his society, but for reasons dissimilar to those of others.

His first wife Khadija was forty years old when he married her while he was very young, only twenty-five. A licentious man who cares only for his carnal desires would not marry a woman who is fifteen years his senior. He needed her support in his mission rather than her physical beauty and remained with her till she died. Then the prophet (A.p.p.h.) married Aisha, his friend Abu Bakre's daughter to take care of him after the death of his first wife. She was the only one of his wives who was virgin and young. The others were previously married, and none of them was young or pretty, six of them were windows

whose husbands died in battlefields and the prophet (A.p.p.h.) felt it necessary to marry them to cater for their needs and provide them with a decent honourable living. Horia Bent Al Harith and Safia the Israelite were daughters of nobilities in their society who were taken captives of war. The prophet (A.p.p.h.) dealt with them kindly in respect of their families, and offered them the options of being redelivered to their people or get married to the prophet and remain in his house-hold. The two women, having adopted Islam preferred to stay with the prophet (A.p.p.h.) as his wives. Ramla Bent Abi Sufian deserted her father who was an adamant enemy of Islam, married a Muslim with whom she immigrated to Abyssinia. But there her husband converted into Christianity and left her alone to suffer alienation and need. The prophet (A.p.p.h.) managed to bring her back to Mecca and married her to support and protect her and to placate her father's deep hatred of Islam.

However, most if not all the marriages of the prophet (A.p.p.h.) were not done for humanistic reasons only, they were also performed to strengthen the ties with the different tribes of Arabia, thus consolidate the mission and its prophet (A.p.p.h.). The marriages also consolidated the relation between the prophet (A.p.p.h.) and his friends and companions such as Abu Baker, Omar and Ali.

Mohammed (A.p.p.h.) in due time became the dominant ruler of Arabia with all its treasures at his command, yet his household suffered from rough life and harsh conditions. A ruler who cares for his carnal desires would provide his wives with all the available luxury to please them and enjoy their company. This was far from the case. One day his wives gathered and rebelled against the

prophet (A.p.p.h.) because of the meagre provisions allotted to each. Allah Almighty addressed the prophet (A.p.p.h.) on this occasion.

> "O you prophet, say to your spouses, "In case you would (like) the present life and its adornment, then come and I will allow you (the necessary) enjoyment, and will release you, a becoming release.
> And in case you would (like) Allah and His Messenger, and the last Home, then Surely Allah has prepared for the fair-doers among you a significant reward" (3)

This is not a licentious man who is satisfied with the barest necessities of life, though he can afford luxury. Thus, the prophet gave his wives two options either to remain in his household and but up with the type of life he had or be released i.e. be divorced and be well-provided for according to Islamic jurisprudence. The nine wives chose voluntarily to stay with the prophet (A.p.p.h.) despite the coarse living conditions they suffered from. This should not be regarded as an indication of avarice, for the prophet (A.p.p.h.) was the farthest from being avaricious. On the contrary by common consent he was the most generous to the needy and the poor. The prophet is not an ordinary ruler, humble life becomes a prophet even if he assumes the role of a ruler; he provides the model in humbleness, and rejection of luxury and comfortable life.

The wives of the prophet (A.p.p.h.) enjoyed an honour above all honour, as they were regarded as the mothers of the believers. They took upon themselves the duty of

teaching the women folk the tenents and pillars of Islam. They played a major role in propagating the mission of Islam and guiding the Muslim women to the right path.

To conclude, it may be mentioned that those who wage war against Islam and the prophet of Islam tend ignore that most of the prophets of Israel were polygamous in a manner that exceeds Mohammad's polygamy by hundred times. It is mentioned in the Torah that David had ten hundred wives and that Soloman had seven hundred free wives and three hundred who were captives or slaves; they were among the prettiest of their time. Yet both Jews and Christians show reverence to those prophets while they attack Mohammad (A.p.p.h.) who got married to nine wives for humanistic and social reasons. Neither of them was pretty; eight among them were advanced in years and previously married and only one was virgin and young.

13.5.Islam and Terrorism

Since the Islamic Revolution of Khomenie in Iran there has been a persistent attempt to couple Islam with terrorism. Whenever and wherever a terrorist attack takes place fingers of accusation are directed immediately and without flinching towards Muslims. There is no attempt here to vindicate some Muslim terrorist groups, but sweeping generalizations are also unacceptable. It is true that some Muslim fanatic groups are not blameless as they tend to change by force the status quo. The savage massacres of the civilian Muslims in Kosovo in Bosnia and the barbaric annihilation of the Muslims in Sheshnia where the international community is satisfied with the role of the neutral spectator and fails to enforce the international law, and to victimize the red-handed criminals encourage these groups and wins them the applaud of the world, Muslim and Non-Muslim. When all the doors of justice are closed, violence becomes the only alternative: "An unjust law," once Ghandi declared, "is itself a species of violence". Nevertheless Islam rejects violence regardless of its causes be they unjust law or terrorist reaction to these laws and systems. Islam believes that "the number of malefactors authorizes not the crime".

Fanaticism is by its very nature narrow-minded and tends to be destructive. Just as there are religious fanatics, there are political, ethnic, racist and football fans as well. They are minorities in every society and tend to change systems that contradict their beliefs by force whenever possible. Nevertheless they remain a minority and their crimes should not stigmatize the whole society.

During world war II. The Nazi and Fascists killed more than forty million people. Both the victims and the criminals were ninety-nine percent Christians. Nobody claimed that Christians are blood-suckers or that Christianity is the religion of blood-shedding or black violence. Christianity calls for mercy, tolerance and absolute lenience. "Resist not evil;" Says Christ "but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also" (Mathew v:39). There is a wide gap between Christianity and the fanatic Christians of the Middle Ages who persecuted those who belonged to other sects or different ethnic origins. In the same way there are great differences, between the fanatic Muslims (very few of them are terrorists) who due to narrow-mindedness, slavish interpretation of texts and the tendency to assume political hegemony and the spirit of Islam which calls for moderation and mercy. Islam has never been an aggressive or subversive faith but its image has been distorted by the fanatics who are a rejected minority in every society.

13.6.Islam and the State

Islam is a religion and a social system as well. It caters for man's body and soul; and recognizes his physical entity as well as his spiritual essence. It is a religion that organizes man's life on earth and prepares him for the everlasting existence in the other world. This dual nature of Islam has persuaded many Muslim scholars to adopt the view that in an ideal Muslim state the secular and religious authorities should be combined in one body. They proclaimed that the religious authorities should assume the political power in their societies. This would help them pray what they preach, to implement their religious values and principles. They believe also that the history of the early Islamic state has proven the possibility of the success of such a combination.

In 622 a.d., Mohamed (A.p.p.h.) migrated to Medina where he assumed for the first time the role of the statesman responsible for ruling his community and defending their welfare in addition to his role as the messenger of Allah, chosen to spread the cause of Islam all-over the world. When the prophet died ten years later Islam had dominated the hearts of the people of Southern Arabia and the Islamic state had become a major force that threatened the greatest empires of the time, the roman and persian.

His successors: Caliph Abu Bakr and Omar followed in the prophet's foot steps. In 637, the Arabs, despite their limited numbers, vanquished the persian empire and managed to spread Islam in Iraq and Iran. In 642, they defeated the Byzantian troops and invaded Egypt. In 644 Omar was assassinated by a hired persian slave. When

caliph Omar died Islam was well-established in Iraq, Iran and Egypt and the Arab armies were racing time to overwhelm North Africa.

It can be maintained that the secular and religious authorities were successfully combined in one person: the prophet (A.p.p.h.), Caliph Abu Bakr and Caliph Omar: in the 22 years during which they assumed both authorities. The reign of Caliph Osman paved the way for the separation of the two authorities. When the Omayad dynasty emerged, there was a virtual separation between the two authorities, though the Caliph was the nominal religious leader and the virtual political one.

Since that time, the Caliph appointed his eldest son as crown prince to succeed him after his death. This system of succession contradicts the caliphate system of the early Islamic state, where the Caliph was chosen on account of his religious authority, his acknowledged leadership of the Muslims, his piety and his loyalty to the Islamic cause rather than his relation to the Prophet (A.p.ph.), or any of the Caliphs. None of the three Caliphs was a blood relative of the Prophet (A.p.p.h.) and none of them was a descendant of the other.

The combination of the two authorities of the early twenty-two years of the Islamic state was a historic coincidence that defies repetition. The leaders of that state were historic figures unequalled and unmatched in world history; more important, the modern state with its complex political, social and economic problems requires statesmen whose qualifications exceed those of religious leaders.

Many attempts, all along the Islamic history, have been made to combine the two authorities under the delusion that the example of the early Islamic state can be repeated, but they all failed. When khomenie declared the establishment of the Iranian Islamic Republic, the two authorities which were superficially combined in the carismatic personality of khomenie remained actually separate. Khomenie was the spiritual leader of the revolution occupying a position similar to that of Mao-Tsi-Tung in China, whereas the secular affairs remained in the hands of a government that catered for the people's economic, political and social affairs.

In Egypt, Sheikh Hassan AL - Bana established a religious movement in 1928 under the name "Muslim Brothers." The declared aims of the movement was to help build a Muslim community where people practise the teachings of their religion accurately and with devotion. It catered for the spiritual and physical health of the young Muslims. With such goals the movement was accepted by the secular authorities before and after the 1952 Revolution, as it posed no challenge to their hegemony. However, gradually the hidden face of the Movement emerged; it is the old dream of combining the secular and religious authorities in the person of the Movement's leader. Thereupon the members of the movement resorted to assassination as a means to assume political hegemony. The state, on the other hand, adopted a policy that banned the activities of the Movement. Bloody confrontations took place before the 1952 Revolution. In the days of Nasser the leaders of the Movement went underground and gave birth to smaller fanatic groups that resorted to terrorism whenever possible. Their main goal remains to establish an Islamic state where the

religious and secular authorities are combined. Unfortunately the leaders of these groups - in their aspiration of political hegemony - are unaware of the impossibility of repeating history.

Notes

1-Abbas Al-Akkad, Woman in the Quran (Cairo: Nahdat Masr, n.d.) p.50.

2-Ibid

(٣) سورة الأحزاب الآيات ٢٨ :٢٩

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُل لِأَزْوَاجِكَ إِن كُنتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأُسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحاً جَمِيلاً (٢٨) وَإِن كُنتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالدَّارَ الآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنكُنَّ أَجْراً عَظِيماً "

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is addressed to Muslims who want to know more about their religion and to Non-Muslims who are keen to discover the authentic concepts of Islam in relation to other religions from an objective contemporary perspective.

The book attempts a comparative study of the different religions of the world, explains elaborately the five pillars of Islam, then discusses some of the main controversial issues connected with Islam.

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